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AN ESSAY

REPRINTED, WITH LARGE ADDITIONS, FROM THE QUARTERLY REVIEW, SEPT. 1860.

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BY

THE REV. J. S. HOWSON, D.D.

Principal of the Collegiate Institution, Liverpool; Joint Author of "The Life and Epistles of St. Paul;" and Hulsean Lecturer in the University of Cambridge.

Εἰς πολλὰς χρείας γυναικὸς χρῄζομεν διακόνου.—*Apost. Const.* iii. 15.

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PREFACE.

THIS Essay is reprinted, with additions, in the hope that something may thus be contributed towards the useful discussion of a very important subject. The present volume is by no means a mere reprint of the article which was published in the *Quarterly Review* for September 1860. The article itself is much enlarged,* and Appendices are annexed. Whether these additions are of value, the reader must judge; but they are considerable in amount, and they relate to very various topics.

The convictions expressed in this volume are of long standing. I should find it very difficult to say when I began to feel sure that some supplementary organization of female help is

* Its general form, however, is unaltered. I mention this to excuse the "we," which has a pedantic appearance, except in anonymous writing.

required by the Church of England, beyond the operations of mere District-Visiting, and the charity which is the overflow of family life. On looking back twenty years, I can recall my painful sense of the contrast between what was done by Roman Catholics on the Continent and by ourselves at home. I remember, one day, in 1843, on a journey between Naples and Rome, one of my companions, a physician who had travelled much, suddenly asked me, after describing what he had seen in various hospitals, "Why cannot Protestant "women do what these Roman Catholic women "do?" And I was obliged to hear this with that disagreeable sensation which we have all experienced when a direct question has been asked to which we are not prepared to give a satisfactory answer.* Another vivid and painful recollection

* The force of this contrast is evidently not to be evaded by dwelling on another contrast, and by comparing the prosperity and thriving industry of Protestant countries with the squalor and poverty of Roman Catholic. Such comparisons themselves are not always very fairly made. Thus Belgium, for instance, is often omitted from the enumeration. And, after all, the condition of a country as to this world's wealth is not an infallible test of its spiritual state. We ought not to be content till Protestantism can give a practical answer to an obvious reproach. See below pp. 87 and 110.

is connected with a period rather later. It was a cause of peculiar mortification and disappointment, when the official employment of women in works of charity began to be really put in practice in the Church of England, to see this done in such a way as to deepen every prejudice, and to retard the establishment of a system of female ministration in harmony alike with Primitive times and the feelings and habits of the English people. There is no need for dwelling here on the suspicion which mystery inevitably creates, or the scandal caused by imitations of an alien ceremonial and by interference with parental rights, or on the want of truth and candour which seems to have a tendency to make its appearance on the confines of Romanism.* There is nothing in all this to

* Instead of saying more on this subject myself, or quoting anything which has been said concerning it in England, I will adduce some words used at the recent Kaiserswerth Conference. (See below, p. xxiv.) Fliedner observed there that there was the most serious reason "die schlimmsten "Folgen von dem Nachahmen der römischen Kirche zu "fürchten. So hätten die puseyitischen Schwestern der "Barmherzigkeit zu Devonport . . . zuerst ein hölzernes "Kreuz an der Seite getragen: sehr bald sey eine Art Rosen-"kranz dazu gekommen . . . dann hundertfaches mechan-"isches Hersagen von Gebeten u. Bibelstellen . . ."—p. 64. I cannot quote this without expressing my regret that our controversies should have given Continental currency to

disturb the convictions which rest on independent grounds. My own convictions on the point in question seemed to grow with time; and I found them much strengthened by a more familiar acquaintance with the facts of our large towns, especially with the consequences of the local separation of rich and poor. In the short paper which is printed here as Appendix I., I ventured, in 1858, to give expression, in the face of some opposition, to a deliberately formed opinion. Before that time I had had the advantage of being in the midst of much discussion on the subject; and now that public opinion has undergone so remarkable a change, it is amusing to look back on the good-humoured ridicule, the curious suspicion, and the puzzling misconceptions, which attended an eager advocacy of what is now felt to be worthy of grave consideration. Meantime I was dimly aware that something had been done in this way among the Protestants of the Continent, and before writing

theological nicknames which are derived from individuals, and which must be offensive to some, while they are certainly unjust to many. But Fliedner states a painful truth when he adds that "die Angst vor solchen krankhaften "Ausartungen" has withheld many excellent people, both in England and America, from looking favourably on the Deaconess-cause.

the article which was accepted by the editor of the *Quarterly Review*, I visited some of the more important foreign scenes of this kind of charitable labour. Appendix III. contains a portion of what I gathered on this journey. About the same time some attention was given to the study of the female Diaconate of the Primitive Church; and some of the results are recorded in Appendix IV. These three supplementary papers (I., III., and IV.) have been allowed to appear in print before, through the kindness of the editor of the *Christian Observer*. They are here republished without any change.* The same may be said of Appendix II., which was a short pamphlet, written at the desire of some friends, for general circulation. Appendix V. is a contribution from Russia. I fear that in a book which has thus grown up by gradual accumulation, there may be some repetitions and some want of connection among the parts; but I hope the references in the notes will obviate any confusion; and immediate publication, now that public interest in the subject is fresh and active,

* Where additional notes are inserted, they are placed in square brackets. No other changes are made in the notes or the text, except for the sake of making the references clear.

seems to be a better course, notwithstanding all these defects, than to wait for the doubtful chance of being able to write a systematic and well-arranged treatise.

Enough has been said, perhaps more than enough, concerning the contents of this book, and the formation of the writer's opinions on the subject in question. I am unwilling, however, to close the Preface without a few additional remarks on one or two of those points in the volume which are most likely to give rise to debate.

To recur, in the first place, to the subject of Sisterhoods, I think it might naturally be said, at first sight, that they have not been quite fairly or generously treated in the present volume. They were practically first in the field; they have done much hard work; and in the face of considerable difficulties they have achieved no small amount of success. All this I cheerfully admit. And yet they have received little more than a passing notice in the course of what is printed here. If this seems to any one strange or unjust, I have to answer, in the first place, that I am very imperfectly informed on the subject of the existing Sisterhoods in England.* The only

* In an article in the *Ecclesiastic and Theologian* for April

institution of the kind which I have visited is that at Clewer.* Of others elsewhere, as at Wantage, Highgate, Ditchingham, Bussage, East Grinsted, and Horbury, I know merely the names, though I have casually heard and read something of the devoted and self-sacrificing labours which are

1862, and in reference to the recent debate in Convocation, the following passage occurs:—"On the subject of female "agency in the shape of Deaconesses, or Sisters of Mercy, "all parties were unanimous, even to a distinctive dress; "and Mr. Seymour deserves our thanks for his introduction "and advocacy of the subject. Why, however, he should "persist in using the term 'Protestant' before 'Deaconesses' "or 'Sisterhoods' we cannot imagine." The writer goes on to say that Mr. Seymour must be fully aware that, as far as the Church of England is concerned, this is "a purely "Catholic movement," and that Sisterhoods have been established by "Anglo-Catholics" after much obloquy. "*That "the Protestant party have stolen their fire, does not give them "liberty to put their own name on another's institution.*" He adds that interference with Sisterhoods would be most injudicious. "Let each have its own rules, and then, "after years of experience, some general principles of "guidance may be laid down, *not by the Bishops*, but by "those who have the management of them" (p. 173). The traces of party spirit are very evident here; the repudiation of Episcopal control by Anglo-Catholics is surely inconsistent; and the accusation of those who, like myself, are unconscious of theft (though this is a small matter), is unjust.

* See p. 133.

connected with their names.* I have to answer, further, that the opinion I have been led to form is in favour of a free and flexible parochial and diocesan Diaconate, rather than a strictly organized system of the conventual kind, and that the two things are really different from one another.

But then it might be said that the Deaconess-Institution is itself a Sisterhood. And on this view those who are opposed to Sisterhoods might hastily include the Deaconess-system in the same indiscriminate censure. Here I think it is important to mark a line of distinction which might easily be overlooked. Deaconess-*Institutions* are only means to an end. There might be *Deaconesses* without them, just as there might be Schoolmasters without Training Colleges, or Clergymen without Universities. Whether we can ever have an efficient organization of Deaconesses without some preliminary provision for testing and training, is

* I am so anxious not to seem unjust, that I hasten to mention a very remarkable account of the beneficent labours of the East Grinsted Sisters (reprinted from the *Church Review* for Feb. 1861), which I read while these pages were passing through the press, and to refer to a private letter, which, after describing the service done in a Sussex cottage, where a woman with nine children was dying of cancer, adds, that there were "no peculiarities except th "of dress," and "no overstrained religious observances."

a point to be determined by reflection and experience. So again, in endeavouring to establish the system, it is clear that we may begin either by detached parochial efforts, leaving the Institution to grow from these roots, if such is the natural result, or, on the other hand, by constructing the Institution at the outset and there gradually preparing agents for various fields of labour.* So also with regard to the further point of associated residence, this is no necessary part of the plan. It is a question not of principle, but of detail, and to be settled by considerations of convenience for work, of fitness and propriety, and of spiritual benefit. To say that a Deaconess cannot work parochially, unless she is associated in a "Home" with others holding the same office, would be to strike at the root of the whole system. To say that an Orphan or a Widow discharging the duties of the office (and such will often discharge them best) must necessarily live in solitary lodgings, would be an obvious cruelty.

By some the word "Deaconesses" is thought to indicate a Clerical Order. And, both starting

* I may refer to what is said (pp. 129, 132) of efforts in London and Liverpool in illustration of the two different methods of beginning.

from this point of view, two very different classes of critics must be encountered. Some would entirely deprecate such an order as a dangerous novelty. Some would earnestly desire it, as being in their view Primitive and Apostolic, but would think it wrong to use the term, unless the order were recognized as such and incorporated into our Church-system in the most formal manner by Episcopal authority. Remarks are made in the Essay in reference to both these opinions;* but continued inquiry has supplied new information and enables me to add something further.

I believe that if women are professionally and officially employed in works of religion and charity under the direction of the Clergy, and if they have the general recognition of the Bishops, this sufficiently satisfies the conditions of the Primitive Female Diaconate. Such was my impression when I first began to study this part of the subject; and this impression has been confirmed by further reading.† I see no proof that the earliest

* See pp. 46—49, 142—149.

† I am aware that my examination of ecclesiastical antiquities is not by any means complete. The *Apostolical Constitutions* have indeed been examined with care; but it would have been satisfactory to have searched all other sources of information with equal minuteness. I may men-

Deaconesses were necessarily chosen for life, or necessarily precluded from marriage,* or even necessarily everywhere appointed by the laying on of hands.† Our Deacons are conventionally in a more strictly clerical position than the Primitive Deacons; and the primitive Deaconesses were in a less clerical position than the Deacons.‡ But without dwelling further on general statements, I will adduce some evidence (in addition to what is given elsewhere) from an early source of information.

In the collection of the Ordination Services of the Nestorian Christians, as published by the younger Assemani,§ I find a distinct "Ordo Chiro-

tion here (in addition to the books referred to pp. 40 and 228) that in the 40th volume of the *Acta Sanctorum* (Antw. 1746) is contained "Joannis Pinii Tractatus de Ecclesiæ "Diaconissis." I have not been able to see either this or a volume which is referred to thus in Coleman's *Antiquities*: "Odelem. *de Eccl. Diaconissis.*"

* See Appendix IV. p. 244.

† See pp. 44, 242.

‡ See pp. 58, 239.

§ Syrorum Chaldæorum, Nestorianorum sacræ ordinationes Chaldaice et Latine (p. 219), in vol. xiii. of the *Codex Liturg. Eccles. Univ.* (Rome 1771). The bibliographers say that this volume of the work is rare. My extracts are made from a copy in the Cambridge University Library, which was formerly Bishop Van Mildert's.

"toniæ Mulierum Diaconissarum," parallel for the most part to the similar service for the appointment of Deacons. Here, among other suitable prayers, which are quite in harmony with the spirit of that which is quoted below in the body of the Essay (p. 39), from the Apostolical Constitutions, the following occurs: — "Domine Deus "fortis omnipotens, qui omnia verbo virtutis tuæ "fecisti, jussuque tuo universa contines, quæ tuo "nutu creasti; qui in viris simul et mulieribus "tibi complacuisti, ut donum Spiritus Sancti illis "dares; — Tu, Domine, etiam nunc per miseri-"cordiam tuam elige pauperem hanc ancillam "tuam ad bonum opus Diaconatus, et da ei, ut "sine maculâ hoc magnum et sublime minis-"terium coram Te perficiat, et in omnibus virtu-"tis operibus sine noxâ custodiatur; utque mu-"liebrem cœtum erudiat, doceatque castimoniam, "et opera justa et recta; mereatque bonorum "operum retributionem a Te recipere in magno "et glorioso die revelationis Unigeniti tui: quo-"niam Tibi et Illi et Spiritui Sancto convenit "gloria, honor, gratiarum actio, et adoratio. "Amen." To which the following rubric is added: — "*Imponit Episcopus manum super "caput ejus, non per modum Chirotoniæ, sed*

"*Benedictionem ei impertitur, et recitat super* "*illam precationem secretam pro viribus suis.*" Assemani's own comment on these services is the following: "Quanquam Diaconissæ nullum in "Ecclesia sacrum ordinem habuerint, per inau- "gurationem tamen mere cærimonialem ad non- "nulla in mulieres pia ministeria deputatæ "fuerunt, potissimum apud Syros" (p. 222). And again: "Hæc verba satis declarant, non ordinem "sacrum sed ministerium ecclesiasticum Dia- "conissæ convenire" (p. 224). It does not seem to me that anything more is needed, so far as this authority is concerned, to confirm the view taken in the present Essay of the position of the early Deaconesses.*

* I must quote too what Morinus (adduced by Assemani p. 265) gives from Nestorian sources. In the service for consecrating a Bishop, prayer is offered up thus for the new prelate:—"Indue eum, Domine, virtute ex alto . . . . "ut creet in virtute doni tui Presbyteros, et Diaconos, et "*Diaconissas*, et Subdiaconos, et Lectores in ministerium "Ecclesiæ tuæ secundum voluntatem divinitatis tuæ." The Nestorians (or Chaldæan Christians) were very widely spread, and must be held to include the Christians of St. Thomas, till the time of the Portuguese settlements in India. Assemani (p. 223) gives proof of the existence of the Deaconess-system in this church as late as the 16th century. As to the *Greek* Church in Syria, the Greek canonist Balsamon says that in his time (the 11th century)

Turning now to a totally different side of this whole subject, viz., to the general theory of woman's place in the social system, I have been very anxious to avoid any extreme statements or unpractical speculations; and yet it was impossible to avoid all expression of opinion on this question. In the friendly notices of these papers in their separate form, which have appeared in various periodicals, I have been almost amused to observe that the greatest stress seems sometimes to be laid on that which I should have thought one of the weakest arguments, I mean that which is drawn from the relative statistics of our male and female population, as regards both numbers and employments.* It is true that these statistics have not until lately been considered so closely as they ought to have been, and that when they are considered, they open to view some very serious questions.

the appointing of Deaconesses had become extinct there (*Canones SS. Apostol. &c.* Par. 1620, p. 340). Assemani (p. 223) quotes Balsamon as saying that at that very time the system was in use in the Greek Church at Constantinople; but I cannot find the passage. Of the West, Assemani's judgment is, "In Occidente post annum Christi 1000 non "speciali alicujus Concilii decreto, sed sensim sine sensu "evanuit Diaconissarum ordinatio et officium." (See p. 50.)

* See pp. 10 and 207.

They have also an important connexion with the subject before us. But it would be a great delusion to suppose that the establishment of a system of Deaconesses would redress the evils which, however keenly felt before, have now been clearly defined by help of the Census. When we notice, indeed, that in the normal state of society the adult women are more numerous than the men by about two or three per cent., it does suggest that there are some specific ministries providentially assigned to the female sex irrespective of marriage; and even in the present irregular condition indicated by our own statistics, nothing, as it seems to me, will do us more good than a large and thorough organization of the beneficent ministrations of women. But in order to rectify our present anomaly, we must look to remedies acting on a large scale—to a well-considered and judicious system of female emigration*—to a better and more systematic

* The emigration of *men* has no doubt been one cause of the present remarkable preponderance of women in England (p. 10, n.), and there is a corresponding deficiency in the United States, and in the Canadian and Australian Colonies. The case was compactly stated in the *Economist* for April 19. But those who have read the recent letters of "S. G. O." and others in the *Times*, will see that great judgment will be required in the measures taken to restore the balance.

education of the girls of the middle class,*— and to such adjustments of remunerative labour between the two sexes, as public opinion, well-informed, may gradually sanction and facilitate.

With regard to this last point, two very different views are prevalent among us, each with its ardent advocates; and probably there are exaggerations on both sides. Some argue, with no little vehemence, that, in regard to remunerative industry and the preparation for it, and, indeed, in regard to almost the whole career of life, it is an injustice that one sex should be dependent on the other, that one half of the human race has no right to determine the sphere of the other and to render its office ancillary to its own. To arguments so strongly put, the prompt and satisfactory answer seems to be this, that the sphere of the female sex is predetermined by a law of nature, and by the inherent instinct of the woman herself; that to endeavour to make her independent of man is a very different thing from endeavouring to facilitate her opportunities of independent remunerative employment; that the correct phrase to use in reference to this point, is

* No point of our social system needs a closer examination than this.

not competition but communion.* If we turn to the factory districts, where the principle of industrial feminine independence is carried to its furthest practical result, we do not find those home-advantages realised which are needed to justify the theory. No doubt this a difficult subject, which requires much careful consideration.† How wise and full of sympathy were those words of a voice which is now silent amongst us! After speaking on a public occasion of the lethargy and ignorance of parents, which are two hindrances to the education of the children of the poor, the late Prince Consort passed to a third hindrance, arising from the state of the labour market:—"What measures "can be brought to bear upon this root of the "evil, is," he observes, "a more delicate question, "and requires the nicest care in handling; for

* Two very recent articles, one in the *North British Review* for February, entitled "Our Single Women," the other in the *National Review* for April, entitled "Why are Women redundant?" show the great interest which is now taken in this subject. Both seem to me to treat the matter with great fairness, though under different aspects.

† In reference to the question raised by Mrs. Jameson (see p. 11) regarding the multitude of men employed in milliners' shops, it must be remembered that some of the work there requires much strength and involves considerable fatigue.

"here you cut into the very quick of the working "man's condition. His children are not only his "offspring, to be reared for a future independent "position, but they constitute part of his pro-"ductive power, and work with him for the staff "of life. *The daughters especially are the hand-"maids of the house, the assistants of the mother, "the nurses of the younger children, the aged "and the sick. To deprive the labouring family "of their help would be almost to paralyse its "domestic existence.*" *

Here we seem to be brought, by a natural transition, to the very opposite side of the whole question. Some will contend, with equal ardour, that all women ought to be occupied in "home ministries," i.e., as wives, mothers, sisters, domestic servants, school-mistresses, governesses (and, of course, deaconesses), that no disaster is so great as that men should cease to think themselves responsible for the support of women, or women begin to think themselves independent of men, that even Miss Emily Faithfull's printing-press is a dangerous anomaly. Here, again, I cannot but believe

* Part of the speech, in which this passage occurs, will be found in a little book called *Prince Albert's Golden Precepts* (p. 81).

that we have an extreme opinion. Whatever may be the theory of men, and whatever may be the preference of women, the necessity of the case practically settles that (to use a current phrase) a very large number of our women must be "bread-winners," and not "bread-makers." But, in fact (and this is the point to which these remarks are meant to tend), whatever our theoretical view may be, the argument for establishing the system of Deaconesses is irresistibly strong. If this subject is to be viewed simply as the religious side of the great question of the remunerative employment of women, it deserves and requires all our zeal; for if it is the religious side, it is the best and most beneficent side. If, on the other hand, all efforts for promoting the mere industrial employment of women in independence are to be deprecated, the argument becomes imperative for urging this new "home "ministry" as a really feminine sphere of useful occupation, and a salutary counterpoise to a dangerous tendency. To whichever side we incline in speculation, the female Diaconate has the advantage of the argument.

There are two reasons why this year is a practically advantageous time for urging this subject

on the attention of the English public. Twenty-five years have now elapsed since the system of Deaconesses began among the Continental Protestants. At the Kaiserswerth Institution a Jubilee Meeting has lately been held, with a Conference of Deputies from various other Institutions; and the recorded results of this Congress are full of the results of a most encouraging experience. Again, the recent debate at home in Convocation is very remarkable, as indicating a singular uniformity of opinion among those who used to differ widely on this question, and as recording a change in public sentiment which cannot be mistaken. A few words on these two subjects may conclude a Preface which is perhaps already too long.

The Jubilee Festival and gathering of those who owe allegiance to Kaiserswerth took place on the 16th and 17th of September, 1861; and the Conference of Deputies from various other Deaconess-Institutions met there on the 9th and 10th of the following month. A very full report of the proceedings at the former, and careful minutes of all the discussions at the latter, have been printed together.* The second portion

* *Das 25-jährige Jubelfest der Diakonissen-Anstalt zu*

of the pamphlet is, in a small compass, one of the most important documents ever published on the female Diaconate in its modern form; and it is frequently quoted in the supplementary notes to the present volume. Twelve distinct Parent-Institutions, or "Mother-Houses," were represented by twenty-one Deputies along with the chief officers of Kaiserswerth; and discussions took place, in the most orderly manner, under the following ten heads:—(1) External relations of the Institution, *i. e.*, to the Church and the State; (2) Relation of the Institution to its Managing Committee — Internal regulations; (3) Training of the Probationers, spiritually and otherwise—Further training of the Deaconesses—Classes of Sisters, *e. g.* Nursing-Sisters, Teaching-Sisters; (4) Costume of the Sisters — External Symbols; (5) Time of probation—Promised period of service — Resignation — Dismissal; (6) The Sisterhood as a corporate body — Rights of the individual Deaconesses in relation to the Sisterhood — Capitular meetings; (7) Mission of the Sisters to out-stations — Visitation of the out-

Kaiserwerth am 16 *u.* 17 *Sept.* 1861, *und die Conferenz der Deputirten von* 13 *Diakonissen-Mutterhäusern, am* 9 *u.* 10 *Oct.* 1861, *zu Kaiserwerth* (Düsseldorf).

stations; (8) Provision for the Sisters — Payment — Rest and recreation; (9) Relation of the individual Deaconess-House to other Mother-Houses; (10) Methods of increasing the number of Deaconesses, and diminishing the prejudices against them. To the minutes is prefixed a full statistical account of the existing Deaconess-Institutions, with an enumeration of their present stations, and the dates of their establishment between 1836 and 1861; and the whole is concluded with the rules of twenty-three Mother-Houses, presented in a tabular form, as regards time of probation, age, and other circumstances of admission, promised period of service, maintenance, and notice of resignation.*

The debate in Convocation of the present year is also published in a separate form, with the speeches delivered by Canon Seymour and Dr. Jelf in 1861;† and the pamphlet is doubtless already in the hands of many of those who are

* It was agreed that another conference is to be held at Kaiserswerth in 1864, and that the subjects for discussion are to be put in circulation previously.

† *Debate in Convocation on Deaconess-Institutions and Protestant Sisterhoods, &c.* Edited by Rev. T. Pelham Dale, M.A., Chaplain to the North London Deaconess-Institution. London: Emily Faithfull & Co.

considering the question. To complete the history of the treatment of this subject by Convocation, it may be worth while to add that it was first brought under discussion there in 1858, partly in connexion with the Report on Home Missions, partly as the result of an independent motion by Mr. Seymour.* No one in that year could have imagined that within three years so great unanimity would have been displayed in regard to a subject involving so many elements of delicacy and difficulty.

J. S. H.

May 1862.

* See p. 143 n.

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DEACONESSES*

SOME of our readers will open this page with the impatient inquiry, "What is a Deaconess?" They will, not unnaturally, expect us

* 1. *Casparis Ziegleri de Diaconis et Diaconissis Veteris Ecclesiæ Liber Commentarius.* Wittebergæ, 1678.

2. *Sisters of Charity and the Communion of Labour: Two Lectures on the Social Employment of Women.* By Mrs. JAMESON. London, 1859.

3. *Der Armen- und Kranken-Freund, eine Monatsschrift für die Diakonie der Evangelischen Kirche. Herausgegeben von Theodor Fliedner und Julius Disselhoff.* Kaiserswerth am Rhein, 1849—1860.

4. *Quelques Mots sur l'Œuvre des Diaconesses, en Réponse au Livre de l'Auteur du Mariage sur le Point de Vue Chrétien, intitulé "Des Corporations Monastiques au Sein du Protestantisme."* Par Madame A. L. BECK, née BERNARD. Paris, 1855.

5. *Church Deaconesses. The Revival of the Office of Deaconess considered; with Practical Suggestions.* By the Rev. R. J. HAYNE, M.A., Vicar of Buckland Monachorum, Devon. London, 1859.

6. *Deaconesses for the Church of England; also a Paper on the Supervision and Training of Workhouse Girls.* By LOUISA TWINING. London, 1860.

to begin with a definition. Now one of our objects in this paper is precisely this, to co-operate with our readers in seeking for and arriving at a definition. Our last wish however is, that our discussion of a subject which we feel to be important should be entered on with suspicion and prejudice. We will so far, therefore, break through our reserve at the outset, as to define approximately what we mean, and to say, that by Deaconesses we understand something contrasted with desultory Lady Visitors on the one hand, and with strictly coventual Sisterhoods on the other. We desire to see women devoting themselves to the nursing of the sick, to the systematic care of the young, to the rescue of the degraded, to the details of parochial work, as the business of their lives; and yet we desire to see this done without ensnaring vows, without any breach of domestic ties, and without even the affectation of what is foreign to the English people and the English Church. How this due medium is to be attained and preserved is the practical question, towards the solution of which we wish to accompany those who are willing to travel with us. We do not forget that it is proper for us to show some reasons why the attempt should be made to realize what amounts, in some degree, to a social and ecclesiastical change; but we hope such reasons will come to view as we proceed.

It must be confessed that if some of the popular prejudices which encumber this subject are unreasoning and foolish, others are only too well founded. To the setting apart of women in England, professionally, for charitable and religious work, objections are occasionally made which hardly deserve the trouble of a grave refutation; but other objections rest on a natural timidity, derived from experience of the past. No faithful member of the Church of England can fail to recollect the theological history and the serious lessons of the last twenty-five years. It is true that our most imminent dangers now are from the direction which is most opposite to that of authority and superstition. It is true also that defections to Romanism have taken place not from any one cause, or through the faults of any one party in the Church. A conversion may be brought about by want of sympathy and by rude, unfair antagonism as well as by successive and gradual approximations. Still we cannot be surprised, when we weigh all the facts of the case, that there should be considerable hesitation regarding any movement which seems, even by possibility, to lead towards the dreaded quarter; nor can we deny that the organization of women for religious work, under certain circumstances, and in the midst of certain influences and associations, does involve peculiar danger. We have

lately been looking through a complete collection of the pamphlets which were published, some ten years ago, regarding the Devonport Sisterhood; and the impression left on the mind by this reminiscence of an old controversy is a very painful one. That controversy is old; but new controversies, not very dissimilar, may arise. They who have not been diverted by these occurrences from their conviction that there are conditions under which women may be safely and most beneficially employed in the manner we have roughly indicated, must not be surprised if at first they are supposed to mean something which they do not really intend. We have no reason to complain of anything which reminds us that the subject before us requires great care both in its theoretical discussion and in its practical handling. We accept all prevalent suspicions as salutary checks. We could almost say that there is reason to be thankful for the mistaken efforts and the painful circumstances which have given us experience of what we are to avoid. It has been truly remarked that we are nearly as much indebted to those who point out the shoals as to those who show us the channel.

Other prejudices, such as those which arise from worldliness and love of ease, or from levity and carelessness — from mere fashion and the indolent apprehension of novelties, we do not

think it necessary, at present, to notice. Whatever the total amount of reasoning and unreasoning prejudice in England may be with regard to this subject, no careful observer can have failed to notice, on the other hand, that, during the last ten years a palpable change has taken place amongst us, both in feeling and practice, in the direction we have generally pointed out. The change of mere feeling is by no means imperceptible. There is less prejudice than there was. This is very evident to any one who has carefully noticed the books and pamphlets which have been published during this period, in description, and in justification, of the work of women.* But the fact is made still more evident in another way. A change of practice is often the precursor of a change of sentiment. Public opinion has its seasons, like the natural world; and active processes gradually

* Among recent publications, we may particularly notice one, *On the Employment of Trained Nurses among the Labouring Poor*, by a Physician (London, 1860). He wishes to see an "order of women" who shall be "missionaries of "health and domestic economy." There are some things in the pamphlet with which we do not agree. But it is important to have such evidence to the helplessness, not only of the Clergyman and the Lady Visitor, in times of sickness, but of the Physician, "if there is no one present "who can form an intelligent comprehension of medical "directions."

change its colours as surely as winter passes into spring. A vast amount of practical work has been recently done by women in ways hitherto unattempted. New enterprises have been bravely undertaken by them, and patiently and successfully pursued. The first topic which will occur to every one, on the threshold of this subject, is the Crimean War, in its connection with one honoured name, and with its great results, both present and expected, in reference to the care of the sick. Our Workhouses too, however necessary, used to be viewed with no little discouragement and fear by Christian philanthropists. But the fact has now been made palpable that, through the agency of religious women, these institutions present invaluable opportunities for the diffusion of good. We have invited attention to a pamphlet which relates partly to the training and supervision of workhouse-girls. The author has, on various occasions, placed this whole subject before the public with much judgment and perseverance. Other ladies, in many parts of the country, are labouring in the same cause; and it has now a journal of its own, which we wish to see largely circulated.* A third and most remarkable illus-

* *Journal of the Workhouse Visiting Society:* London, 1859—1862 (eighteen numbers). In connection with this subject, we desire to mention three little tracts lately published by another lady: *A Plea for the Helpless, or Timely*

tration of the general progress which has been made, is the work of the Bible Women, described in our last number.* The fact is now made evident, not only that among the poorest women most efficient agents may be found for the evangelization of the lowest and most degraded, but that this agency may be organised, under due superintendence, on the most extensive scale.

These, too, are only specimens. Efforts are now in progress for the spiritual benefit of women belonging to classes above the lowest, and the conditions of whose life demand a separate and specific treatment. For their temporal benefit homes are being established and societies formed under various auspices. We might give a long catalogue of undertakings which have reference to the protection of orphans, the training of servants, the influence over poor mothers in their own homes, the education of girls of the middle class, and the respectful care of gentlewomen in the time of age or misfortune: and some of them will be noticed incidentally as we proceed. All such undertakings are especially within the province of female administration. Of the most

Prevention; A Few Words on Behalf of Orphan Girls in Union Houses; and *The Brockham Home and Industrial Training School.*

* *Quart. Rev.* for July 1860. "The Missing Link and the London Poor."

painful of all these subjects it is enough to say here that the truth is beginning to be more and more recognized, that the lowest and most miserable are only to be recovered through the influence of the purest, and best, and most devoted of their sex.

This, moreover, is very remarkable, — that the same thoughts regarding woman's work have occurred to many independent minds, and that the work itself has been begun and pursued under great diversities of social and religious conditions. This is a circumstance which will be still more likely to arrest our attention, when we combine it, as we propose to do, in one view, with what has been simultaneously in progress on the Continent. To some of those at home, whose Protestantism is peculiarly timid, and who, in judging of a religious work, are apt to look, not to internal evidence, but to the complexion under which it is presented, we would particularly point out that some of the most encouraging recent narratives of female exertion and success have appeared under auspices which cannot be questioned.* On the whole it cannot be doubted that the ground is comparatively clear for the discussion of the whole subject without fear of suspicion

* We may refer to *English Hearts and Hands* and to *Haste to the Rescue*, both issued by the same publishing house as the *Missing Link* and *Ragged Homes*, which were lately reviewed.

and prejudice. The English mind has become gradually familiarized, far more than at any previous period, to the operations of what we hope we may call, without offence, the Female Diaconate.

There is another collateral subject, without some allusion to which we should take an incomplete view of that which is before us. We refer to the question of the industrial employment of women. This question has recently attracted considerable attention, and very naturally. Some startling truths have been brought to view by the last Census and by other modes of inquiry. The public mind is gradually becoming familiar with the fact, that in 1851 three millions out of our six millions of adult women laboured for their subsistence, and that two millions out of six (that is, one-third of the whole) laboured thus and were also unmarried. The interest with which we look at this subject is by no means diminished when we examine some of the details of classification. It seems that 25,000 women are professional nurses.* These, of course, belong to the lower classes. The significance of another fact was forcibly pointed out by Miss Parkes, in a paper read before the Bradford Meeting of the Association for Social Science. Taking the higher classes only, which cannot amount to more than one-third

* This is exclusive of a much larger number of nurses employed in domestic service.

of the whole, we find 15,000 governesses. Now there is no reason to expect any change in the general laws which regulate the employment of women. An elaborate and diversified civilization has rather a tendency to increase the necessity and multiply the occasions of female labour, though often under circumstances of extreme suffering. Moreover there is a permanent excess of the female over the male population: in 1851 this amounted to 500,000.* Are we to say that half a million of our women are superfluous? Is it not more reasonable to believe, as was suggested some years ago in a paper read before the Manchester Statistical Society, that "the female "sex in Christian countries are probably designed "for duties more in number and importance than "have yet been assigned to them?"

* The results of the Census of 1861 can now be given. The male population of the United Kingdom, including the absent soldiers and sailors, was 14,380,634; the female, 14,954,154. The females therefore are now more numerous by 573,530, an excess much enhanced if we exclude the men serving out of the country. And the disproportion seems to be increasing. In 1841 there were to every 100 males, 104·9 females, in 1851 there were 105·1, in 1861 there were 106·2. Yet of children born alive, more girls are born than boys. It is after the seventeenth year that the statistical balance inclines the other way. See *Comp. to the Almanac for* 1862, pp. 10, 11. It does not seem that the mission of woman outside the circle of marriage is likely to be restricted. See Appendix II.

Two consequences are readily seen to follow from the consideration of these broad facts.

In the first place, it is a fallacy to speak of marriage as though it were almost a matter of course in a woman's experience. It is easy to say that a woman appears nowhere to so great advantage as in her husband's house. We admit that this is perfectly true. But to reiterate this truism, in answer to serious arguments having reference to the occupations of the unmarried, is simply to urge theory against fact. Polygamy is the only logical result of such reasoning.

A second inference from the facts is this, that it is a grave duty to take into consideration the employments which are suitable for women, to provide facilities for their entering upon them, and aid in preparing them for their happy and efficient discharge. It is no part of our business here to dwell on the purely industrial aspect of this question. It appears that 30,000 men, almost all unmarried, are employed in London in the sale of various articles of millinery. Mrs. Jameson asks, "Where are their 30,000 sisters?" We only repeat the question, leaving others to answer it.* It is objected, that changes in favour of women would disturb the labour-market, and take employment from the men. The refutation of this, which we be-

* No opinion whatever is expressed here on this particular point. See Preface.

lieve to be very easy, we consign to more competent hands, simply contenting ourselves with the remark, that at least suffering ought to be shared. It is further objected that for some employments, involving a good knowledge of arithmetic, which have been suggested for women, there is a natural inaptitude in the female mind. We are sure that this is quite untrue, and that a practical refutation ought to be given, by providing, on a large scale, a more useful education for girls of the middle class. But these are questions which belong to a wider circle than that within which we are here circumscribed; and now that public attention has been definitely turned to the facts of the case, and many minds are seriously considering them, we have a confident hope that beneficial changes will take place both in opinion and practice — that our workhouses will be less crowded by able-bodied female inmates, that our needle-women will be less miserable, and that the middling and higher classes will gradually lose the false notion that it is hardly creditable for their members of the gentler sex to work for subsistence, or at least that teaching is the only employment, with this end in view, which can be contemplated as "genteel."

Our present inquiries relate to a narrow area of female employment, with regard to which these objections at least cannot possibly be alleged, that

the work is not suited to the talents and dispositions of women, or that it would interfere with the work assigned to their more athletic brothers. Here, at least, in nursing the sick, in visiting the mothers of the poor, in caring for neglected children, women are not likely to fail, and men can hardly interfere with advantage. Whatever exception might be taken to female labour in its purely industrial and secular aspect, few will blame it in its charitable and religious. And it was necessary, in these introductory sentences, to mention these its two aspects together: for, in fact, the charitable and religious work of women has its industrial and secular side. We have seen that the opening of new and easy paths of female occupation is desirable; we shall see that payment is an important element in the organization of female ministration in the Church. Of those who are willing to labour, some will labour from pure love and the principle of piety; but these, too, must be supported. Philanthropic effort and Christian organization must have a distinct and intelligent connection with the social state of the times, otherwise they will be theoretical and comparatively useless; and of the question of deaconesses it may be said very truly (though it is by no means the whole of the case) that it is the religious phase of a great and pressing social problem connected with

what King Alfred called "the spindle-side of the house."

Thus it seems evident that the time is not ill chosen for a general review of the whole subject. Enough has been written and enough has been done, even in England, in this matter of female agency, to enable us to lay hold, if not of some general principles on which the agency ought to be conducted amongst us, yet at least of some encouragement to proceed, and some prudential considerations which ought to be carefully kept in view. We have the best reasons now for inquiring what institutions of this kind have existed, and with what results, in earlier ages and in other countries. We desire to avoid all premature theories and all dogmatic assumptions regarding a work which (with us) is at present only in its earlier stages. But we may, at least, bring some scattered facts together, and hope to present them usefully in combination. If we ascend thus sufficiently high to obtain a general retrospect of what has been done, we may expect, at the same time, to gain a prospect in regard to the future which will not be without its value.

Our aim, as we have said, is rather practical than theoretical; and certainly we have no intention of entering on any discussion concerning the

Rights of Women. Yet we require, as a starting point, some general theory as to Woman's place in the social world. When we venture on a large inquiry concerning the charitable work of women, and the organization which is best for securing its accomplishment, we must be sure that our arguments rest on some principle of fitness and truth. Now we believe that no definition is so true, none so honourable to woman, or so important for the other sex to recognize, as that her place is *to help*. Whenever the strong becomes weak, whenever mere strength is weakness, when it is not power that we need, but influence, when prompt good sense is demanded, delicate tact, patience, cheerfulness, a gentle hand, a quick eye, — then "it is "not good that the man should be alone." *Woman's work is helping work.* The truth which lies in this definition, and which perhaps it would not be so easy to express in all other languages as by our English word "help," is precisely given in the Greek original* from which the term "Deaconess"

* The idea involved in the Greek word διάκονος is precisely that of helpful service. The derivation does not point, as is often thought, to labouring and slaving in the dust, but rather to the notion of alacrity and willing activity. See Buttmann (*Lexil.* 40), who adds that the word has always retained "the free and honourable idea which it originally implied." The διάκονος is never properly a slave. When Pliny speaks of the deaconesses of the Primitive Church, his phrase is, "ancillæ quæ ministræ dicuntur."

comes, and which the Germans have made their own by adopting the word "Diakonie." It is still more important to notice, that we have here the principle and the word which are given to us from the highest source.* It would surely be a great mistake to limit the Divine law of woman's mission on the earth to the mere relation of marriage. The Scripture is far wider than our prejudices. Wherever helping work is to be done, there woman is in her place. Motherly and sisterly care are often most needed when they cannot be had within the sphere of domestic life. Home is indeed woman's highest and most natural sphere; but the outcasts of society cannot be reached by home-influences, unless those influences are brought to them; and it is only a female hand that can bring them. If the activity of the stronger sex is to penetrate all parts of human life, and yet feminine influence is to be restricted within families, the equilibrium of society is not preserved, but marred.

These truths have been forcibly expressed by

While engaged on the consideration of the term, we refer once for all to two articles in Herzog's *Real-Encyklopädie für Prot. Theologie und Kirche* — one on "Diakonissa," by the editor, the other on "Diakonen- und Diakonissen-Häuser," by Wichern, whose own organization of the parallel ministry of the other sex is very famous in Germany.

* Gen. ii. 18.

Protestant writers on the Continent;* but we have at least equal need to consider them at home; and Mrs. Jameson has bequeathed to us, in her *Communion of Labour*, a manual on the subject, for which we cannot be too grateful. She has treated this question of women's work under the aspect of a general law, and adorned it with all her richness of language and facility of illustration. "The woman is not without the "man; nor the man without the woman." † This

* Reference may be made here to the discussion "On "the Service of Women in the Protestant Church" at the meeting (the eighth) of the *Kirchentag*, held at Lübeck in 1856, and to Adolphe Monod's two sermons, entitled, *La Femme* (Par. 1855). The subject was opened at Lübeck by an address from Wichern of Hamburg, and closed by one from Pastor Mallet of Bremen, who said: "Das Wort für das "Gedächtniss ist das Wort *Gehülfin*. Ihr lieben Frauen, "vergesst das Wort Gehülfin nicht. Viele Frauen, wenn sie "das hören, denken an die Ehe und an das Haus. Das ist "auch richtig. . . . Aber es ist doch beschränkt. . . . Es "steht nicht da, das die Frau soll *ihres* Mannes Gehülfin "sein, sondern dass sie soll *des* Mannes Gehülfin sein. In "allem Werk, was der Mann zu thun hat, soll die Frau seine "Gehülfin sein."—*Verhandl.* (Berl. 1856) pp. 162, 163. So Monod, in reference to the same text and the same principle (Gen. ii. 18): "Ceci s'applique à toute femme, non à la femme "mariée seulement. Car Eve n'est pas seulement la femme "du premier homme, elle est encore la première femme; et, "solidaire de tout son sexe ainsi qu'Adam l'est du nôtre, elle "en offre dans sa personne le type et une sorte de miniature. p. 5.

† 1 Cor. xi. 11.

is her principle: and she pursues its consequences through all the relations of life, and with every variety of expression. "Men and women are by "nature mutually dependent, mutually helpful:" and this communion is not limited to one or two relations which custom may define and authorize, but "must extend to every possible relation in "existence, in which the two sexes can be socially "approximated." The man is, in the first place, the sustainer and defender of his home: then he works to sustain and defend the community. So woman begins by being the nurse, the teacher, the cherisher of her home: then she uses these qualities and sympathies on a larger scale, to cherish and purify society. "But still," Mrs. Jameson proceeds, "the man and the woman must "continue to share the work: there must be the "communion of labour in the large human family, "just as there was in the narrower precincts of "home." * Throughout she insists that the element of power and the element of love ought to be co-operative. In every relation of society she would have the presence of "the feminine nature "to minister through love," as well as "the mascu-"line intellect to rule through power." † She gives illustrations from varied sources and from her own experience. Thus she points out how essentially it must be the work of women to reclaim those

* Pp. 13, 14. † P. 84.

other women whose life has been an outrage on their nature. But perhaps her most forcible illustrations are drawn from the contrast of men and women, and the influence which feminine gentleness and tact can exercise over rough and hardened characters in the other sex.* We are told of a lady's power over the most brutal criminals in Norfolk Island. This was not only because she was fearless, and gentle, and good, but because she was a woman, and "the men who "respected nothing else respected her."† Howard's evidence is quoted in regard to the powerful influence of women in the continental prisons of his day;‡ and Mrs. Jameson confirms the truth from her own recent experience. All these

* An illustration as regards Hospitals is given (p. 95) from the Crimean War, when coarseness and sullenness were allayed by the presence of ladies. We may give an illustration of our own from one of the reports of the Saint-Loup Deaconess Institution. "Un fidèle pasteur, que ses fonc-"tions appellent à visiter deux des hôpitaux desservis par "nos diaconesses, nous parlait un jour du changement qui "s'opérait dans ces malades une fois qu'ils étaient entrés à "l'hôpital. Auparavant ils se montraient grossiers, impa-"tients, colères; ils devenaient aussitôt paisibles et doux "comme des agneaux. Cette remarque s'appliquait surtout "à des ouvriers d'un chemin de fer en construction: mais on "en a fait une toute semblable sur des matelots anglais de "l'hôpital évangélique de Gênes, aussi desservi par deux "diaconesses de St-Loup."—*Seizième Rapport* (1859), p. 6.

† P. 98. ‡ P. 30.

cases she regards as only instances of a general and essential law, — the same law which is the basis of domestic life.* She urges that this law cannot be broken or neglected without disaster. And then she asks: "It is granted as a principle "that ample scope should be given to the man to "perform his share of the social work, and ample "means of instruction to enable him to perform "it well. What provision is made to enable the "woman to do *her* work well and efficiently?" †

"There are thousands and thousands of wo-"men," continues Mrs. Jameson, "who have no "protection, no guide, no help, no home; — who "are absolutely driven, by circumstances and "necessity, if not by impulse and inclination, to "carry out into the larger community the sym-"pathies, the domestic instincts, the active ad-"ministrative capabilities, with which God has "endowed them; but these instincts, sympathies, "capabilities, require first to be properly deve-"loped, then properly trained, and then diverted "into large and useful channels, according to the "individual tendencies. . . . What I insist "on particularly is, that the means do not exist "for the training of those powers, and that the "sphere of duties which should occupy them is "not acknowledged. . . . Such questions as "these seem to be as yet unsettled: — Whether a

* Pp. 38, 98. † P. 14.

"more enlarged sphere of social work may not be "allowed to woman in perfect accordance with "the truest feminine instincts? Whether there "be not a possibility of her sharing practically "in the responsibilities of social as well as do-"mestic life? Whether she might not be better "prepared to meet and exercise such higher re-"sponsibilities? And whether such a communion "of labour might not lead to the more humane "ordering of many of our public institutions?" *

It is very difficult to resist this reasoning. When we think of all the wounds of society for which healing is required — of the evil caused by drunken nurses, who can be bribed to give their patients drink — of the need of softening and elevating influences in our workhouses — of the fate of the unfriended workhouse-girl when she goes to service in a household where she finds no sympathy — of the dangerous position of female domestic servants when out of place — of the female prisoner when she is just returning to liberty — of squalid homes, helpless mothers, and orphan children;—and when we remember that the work demanded for the alleviation of such evils, if it is to be effectual, must be *permanent and patient and pervading* — that it requires system, organization, preparation, and training — it is

* Pp. 15, 72.

very difficult to give credence to some of the conventional maxims of our times. We are forced to ask why some of our homeless women may not be educated for nurses, instead of filling the wretched ranks of needle-women. And we are unable to understand, if it is right that a girl should leave her home to be a governess, why it would be wrong for her to leave it that she may be a deaconess.

Some of these considerations have their force at all times. We can hardly imagine any conditions of society in which motherly and sisterly care is not required in many scenes outside the domestic circle, and when this helping work would not be made more efficient by plan and organization. But there are special circumstances in our times which demand such provision with a voice perhaps more imperative than at any former period. A complicated and rapidly-progressive civilization is perpetually opening new spheres of usefulness, new scenes of suffering, new opportunities for the work of the head and the heart, as opposed to the exercise of mere bodily force; and the disaster throughout society will be proportionately greater, if the necessity for adaptation and supplementary organization is disregarded. Let us take just one feature of our times, common to the whole of Europe, but more strongly marked in England than elsewhere, and view it in its social

consequences, and in connection with the services which might be rendered by a systematic female diaconate.

Every one has noticed, as a characteristic of the period in which we live, what has been called "a "congestion to the metropolis," in all the great cities of Europe; that is, the accumulation of dense masses of the labouring and distressed population in our larger towns. But there is a correlative fact which is not always observed with equal distinctness of view, namely, the *radiation outwards* from our great towns of the wealthy and educated. The railway system and other facilities of conveyance give to those who are in competent circumstances the opportunity of placing their families and of finding a home for themselves in the midst of fresh air and country scenes, while yet they are not separated from the centre of their daily toil. Meanwhile the poor and degraded are accumulated in increasing numbers, without any of that proximity of culture and gentle influence which is always found in a rural village, and which used to be found in old-fashioned times even in the places of dense population. Thus there is a vast and widening gulf between the rich and the poor, between the educated and the ignorant, between the workers and the work, between the power of good influence on the one hand, and the tendency to hopeless degradation on the other. It would

be useless, and worse than foolish, to declaim against this social change. It is inevitable. It has also its favourable side. But vast and incidental evils are connected with it: and our plain duty is to inquire what supplementary provision it demands, in addition to what we have, for raising and rescuing and evangelizing the poor.

Now it is evident that two things are needed — contributions in money, steadily supplied, from those who live in green and spacious suburbs, for those who are crowded together in the dark and dismal heart of the city; and contributions, equally steady and continuous, of living human sympathy and labour. Of the former, however important, it is not our province to speak here. Of the latter we can say, without a risk of contradiction, *where* the sympathy which is most tender and the labour which is most patient is to be surely found. It is the gentle and assiduous care, the instinctive tact, the prompt good sense, of *Christian women*, which is most wanted in regard to the homes and the habits of the degraded parts of our population.

Instead of wandering through a forest of details, let us take a single illustration, by no means the most obvious and forcible, of the evil and its remedy. The Sunday-school, however inferior to domestic teaching, is one of the great and necessary instruments of the religious training of our poorer classes; but it ceases to have its distinctive power

and excellence, if Sunday-school teachers of high station and culture, and of formed character, are utterly absent. Here it is that the evil meets us in one of its varied forms. Those who would be the natural teachers — the educated Christian women — are abundant in the suburbs: those who need the teaching — the squalid and neglected children — swarm in the courts and alleys at the centre. The workers and the work are separated from each other. We have heard the consequences of this state of things described by clergymen of experience in more places than one. In a large manufacturing town, where the Sunday-schools have long been famous, and where they have hitherto been most efficient means of binding together various classes in sympathy, we are told that those who once had a long list of candidates for the office of teacher, now cannot find them, and that the social danger is great from the growing separation of classes which are ceasing to know one another. Is it not evident that the continued presence of a few women of staid character, good education, and Christian mind, in such districts, would precisely supply the element of strength and the bond of union which are needed in the Sunday-school? *

* This subject is discussed more fully in a paper written nearly two years before the present article was first published. See Appendix I.

It is equally evident that such a subsidiary organization of female work as that which we are indicating would supply other parochial wants which are equally urgent. Those districts which are deprived of efficient Sunday-school teachers are by the same causes (to say nothing of Infants' schools, and Girls' schools) deprived of efficient District-visitors: and even where there are district-visitors, willing, well-educated, and abundant, how much harm is often done by inexperience, wilfulness, want of judgment, and fitful irregularity! Miss Nightingale points out, with no little humour, in a well-known pamphlet, how hard a thing it is to visit well.* How much strength would be infused into all these efforts of volunteers by the presence of the regular deaconess, trained to her work, and devoting all her time to it professionally and of course! And suppose, further, a pestilent fever to break out in the courts and alleys visited by the benevolent lady, who has young children or young brothers and sisters at home. Is it not evident that domestic duty requires her to withdraw? Thus the help is lost when the need is the sorest: but then is the time when the Deaconess is most surely present, with the minister of religion and the physi-

* *Institution of Kaiserswerth for the Practical Training of Deaconesses* (1851), p. 7.

cian, and perhaps far more useful than either of them.

So we might pursue the subject, through a multitude of parochial details. As to the comparative efficiency of men and women in regard to these details, there can be no doubt that in many cases the latter have infinitely the advantage. Let it be remembered that during a large portion of the day the poor cottage is a "woman's house "and a children's house." The cooking of the dinner, the cleaning of the floor, the turning of an invalid in bed, the feeding of the baby, may be, to a religious woman, the introduction and opportunity to the highest spiritual service; when the clumsy good intentions of men would be the cause only of irritation and sullen reserve. We have spoken of helping work. Who is so near to the strong man in his hour of sickness and despondency as the woman who nurses him? Who can ever have such means of reaching his heart with the encouragements and gentle admonitions of the gospel? And then there is the Penitentiary question (to recur again to the subject from which we instinctively shrink), with all its poisonous and insidious ramifications. Here particularly women are all-powerful. We rejoice to see that "female missionaries" are now employed to reclaim those who cannot easily tell their griefs or describe their temptations except to one of their

own sex. And especially is such agency required "to take oversight of those who leave penitentia-"ries to go to their homes or into service. They "often fall again," as is remarked by one possessed of much experience, "through want of kind "guardianship and continuance of the religious "influences they have enjoyed in the asylums."

It must be observed, also, that many of these subjects are by no means limited to crowded parishes, but have an equal significance in relation to the rural districts.* We are thoroughly persuaded that throughout the whole range of society, in town and country, we are deeply suffering from the want of organized female agency in works of charity and religion; and we believe that we shall be able to show, from a historical survey and a critical examination of the subject, that there is nothing in Scripture, nothing in Protestantism, nothing in Decorum, nothing in Common Sense, to prevent a very extensive change in this respect; but, on the contrary, that such a change is urgently pressed upon us, alike by a true appreciation of our own circum-

* As to the wants of rural districts, see what is quoted just below, from Southey; and as to a mode of supplying some of those wants, see what is said afterwards of the plan of training Country Nurses now in progress at King's College Hospital. We may refer here to what is very truly said (pp. 5—14) of our villages and hamlets in a little book entitled *Earning a Living* (1861).

stances, by the practice of primitive times, and the experience of continental countries.

In the first place, there is nothing new in what is here proposed. The *idea* of women set apart professionally, without vows, for charitable work is not new. We might quote many who have written strongly on the subject; but there is one name above all others to which it is natural here to refer. It is almost exactly fifty years ago that Southey, in the first number of this Journal, forcibly pointed out the removal of the old reproach, that Protestantism has no missionaries. It is almost exactly thirty years ago that he told again how he had watched "the unpromising "commencement of the Protestant missions, their "patient progress, and the success with which "God was blessing them;" and then he added:* "Thirty years hence (*i. e.* about 1860) another "reproach may also be effaced, and England may "have its Sisters of Charity." The thought had worked actively in Southey's mind from the time when he visited the Béguinage at Ghent, on his journey to Waterloo, in the year after the battle. While writing in that year to Sharon Turner, he says:—"The total absence of religion from our "poor-houses, alms-houses, and hospitals, is as "culpable, in one way, as the excess of superstition

* *Colloquies*, ii. p. 330.

"is in another." Four years later he is writing to Mr. Rickman, on the transference of "female "education" to some supposed English Béguinage; and five years later still he is in correspondence with Mr. Hornby, the rector of Winwick, concerning a scheme "for directing the personal "charity of females to hospitals rather than to "prisons,"—for doing, in fact, in the former what Mrs. Fry had done in the latter.* But in the *Colloquies* the theory of the subject is systematically treated:—"Piety has found its way "into your prisons. Your hospitals are implor-"ing it in vain; nothing is wanting in them but "religious charity; and oh! what a want is that! "and how different would be the moral effect "which those medical schools produce upon the "pupils educated there, if this lamentable defi-"ciency were supplied! I know not whether "they or the patients suffer most from its absence. "Many are the lives which might be saved by it; "many are the death-beds to which it would ad-"minister a consolation that is now too often "wanted. . . . . A school of medicine ought

* *Life and Correspondence,* iv. p. 156; v. p. 25; vi. p. 52. It seems that in 1829 an institution for training nurses was set on foot by Mr. Hornby in conjunction with Mr. A. Hodgson of Liverpool. The higher classes appropriated those who were trained by these means, and the scheme came to an end. (P. 72.)

"also to be a school of Christian humanity. .
". . . Disease and wretchedness are as con-
"stant in their course as time; the compassion,
"the tenderness, whereby, in a far greater degree
"than by any human skill, where these are want-
"ing, they are to be alleviated and lessened, exist
"among us, but they are latent, and require to
"be called forth and put in action. . . . .
"England is grievously in need of her Sisters of
"Charity! There is nothing Romish, nothing
"superstitious, nothing fanatical in such associa-
"tions; nothing but what is righteous and holy;
"nothing but what properly belongs to that reli-
"gious service which the Apostle James has told
"us is 'pure and undefiled before God and the
"Father.'" *

Reference is made to essays on the subject in periodicals and pamphlets of that day; † but it is evident that the chief suggestions came from Southey himself. The Appendix is full of interest; and there we come upon one aspect of the subject which is apt to be overlooked. The sufferings of the poor in country districts during times of sickness, and the imperfection of the medical attendance which they obtain, are noticed at length; and a remedy is suggested, which is, in fact, the system of Deaconesses. "The "attendants on the sick, whether professional or

* Pp. 318, 320, 330. † Note, p. 319.

"menial, are commonly actuated by scientific "zeal, by mere natural humanity, or by mer- "cenary motives: but these cannot be trusted to "for steady attention: the one subsides with the "solution of a question, the other hardens by "habit, the last requires jealous inspection. . ". . . Would that it were possible to procure "a few women of a superior order to the gene- "rality of nurses, and taught by a residence in "the hospitals to recognize and relieve the most "common kinds of illness. They should be ani- "mated with religion. Science and mere hu- "manity cannot be relied on. An order of women "such as these, distributed amongst the country "parishes in the kingdom, would be of incalcu- "lable value." *

Nor is the thing itself, the actual institution of Deaconesses, new and untried. The institution is both a Primitive and a Protestant fact. There have been, and there are, Deaconesses in the Reformed Churches of the Continent; and they occupied a recognized and rather prominent position in the Early Church. And thus we come immediately on a very important aspect of the subject. We separate it off at once from what is distinctively Roman Catholic. We propose now to take a rapid historical review of this institu-

* Pp. 430, 431.

tion as it existed in early times, and as it exists now. Such a review will bring us incidentally in contact with the prevalent feelings and theological opinions of our own time and country, and will lead us naturally to the practical reflections which are most likely to be useful.

As to the system of Deaconesses in primitive times, the case may be fairly stated thus — that the primitive diaconate consisted of two co-ordinate branches: the diaconate of the men, and the diaconate of the women. It was felt, as Neander well expresses it, that "though public "preaching be forbidden to women, yet they "have peculiar gifts for service." * This service of women also, as he truly says elsewhere, had "a special ground in the circumstances of the "times." † It must be remembered that among the Greeks, even of that day, the female sex lived in greater retirement than has been customary among western nations. Christianity would have been much impeded in its progress through families, as it is among Mahomedans now, without some kind of female agency. ‡ Thus we find the

* *Pflanzung u. Leitung*, pp. 211—213.

† *Kirchengeschichte*, II. i. 221.

‡ For some remarks on the bearing of the Deaconess-question on modern missions in the Mahomedan world, see below in our account of the Riehen Institution.

Deaconess a conspicuous figure in the Early Church, side by side with the Deacon. And it is by this parallelism that we shall probably apprehend her position most correctly. With us, indeed, the true diaconate may be said to be almost in abeyance; and it is perhaps represented more exactly by the Scripture-reader in some of our parishes than by the clergyman in his first year of ordination. The primitive deacons were half laymen, and such was the position of the primitive Deaconesses. Epiphanius says that these female ministers were broadly distinguished from the Presbyters, in that they were not allowed to officiate liturgically.* They were, however, formally set apart to their office, and were required to go through a period of probation. They seem to have been divided into two classes, not very precisely distinguished from one another, one class of older women, one of younger. Widows were preferred, and especially widows who had been mothers, that (to quote the words of Tertullian),† "having had a training in all human affections, "they might know how to aid others both by sym-"pathy and counsel." The terms "widowhood" and "diaconate," however, appear to have been used for the office indifferently.‡ The ages were

* Epiph. *Hær.* 79, 4. † Tert. *De Virg. Vel.* c. 9.

‡ At the end of Ignat. *Ep. ad. Smyrn.*, we find the words, ἀσπάζομαι τὰς παρθένους, τὰς λεγομένας χήρας, c. 13,

variously fixed at sixty, fifty, and forty, with a dispensing power in the Bishop, in case of a younger woman of proved discretion.* The question of age would doubtless depend, in some degree, on the duties required of these women. Their general functions were connected with the nursing of the sick, the visiting of captives, and the exercise of hospitality. But they had especial reference to persons of their own sex. These officers were door-keepers for the women, and preserved order at the times of public worship; they were catechists of the female converts; † they

where Hefele has the following note: "Diaconissæ, etsi "essent *virgines*, χῆραι tamen appellabantur, quia primis "ecclesiæ temporibus *viduæ* ad munus Diaconissarum eligi "solebant."—*Pat. Apost.* p. 234. We may remark here that the proof offered by this passage of the custom of having Deaconesses in the Early Church is not affected by any question regarding the authenticity of the Epistles of Ignatius.

* The word "dispensation" may not be the most appropriate; but the well-known passage of Tertullian (just referred to) exhibits to us a Bishop appointing a very young unmarried woman to the post of official widow. See below on Olympias.

† The words of the Fourth Council of Carthage (A. D. 398) are well worth quoting at length: "Viduæ vel sanctimo-"niales, quæ ad ministerium baptizandarum mulierum eli-"guntur, tam instructæ sint ad officium, ut possint apto et "sano sermone docere imperitas et rusticas mulieres tem-"pore quo baptizandæ sunt, qualiter baptizatori interrogatæ "respondeant, et qualiter accepto baptismate vivant." xii.

attended them at their baptism, and in certain cases were a medium of communication between them and the clergy.* The numbers of such "mi-" nistering widows" probably varied considerably, according to the density and exigencies of the population.† On the whole we cannot doubt that a vast number of conversions in the early ages were due to this source, and that it diffused a pure and spiritual influence through families in all ranks of society. Though the Deaconesses could not teach publicly, they could be diligently and unceasingly occupied "in the private ministry of the "word;" ‡ and it may indeed be truly said that by this ministration "woman made an ample return "to Christianity for what Christianity did for her."§

We believe that no one who has examined the sources of information on the subject which exist in various places, through the period between the

* *Apost. Const.* ii. 26; iii. 15.

† It is stated in a passage of Eusebius (*Hist. Eccl.* vi. 43) that at Rome, in the middle of the third century, while there were about a hundred and fifty ministering men of various grades, there were fifteen hundred χῆραι σὺν θλιβομένοις. All we can infer from this is that "widows" were in a kind of official position at the head of the whole class of sufferers. Chrysostom (*Hom.* 66, *on Matt.*) mentions a κατάλογος at Antioch of 3000 widows and virgins.

‡ "In suo sexu ministrabant in baptismo et ministerio "verbi."—Jerome on *Rom.* xvi. 1.

§ Bunsen's *Hippolytus*, iii. 358.

death of St. John and the reign of Justinian, will hesitate to say that the sketch given above of the primitive order of Deaconesses, though imperfect, is correct. The means of information, as we have remarked, are various. They are not even limited to Christian sources. Pliny, in his well-known letter from Bithynia, speaks of the heroic constancy of two Christian "ministræ," who were tortured under his orders.* So also we might quote Lucian in illustration of the service of these devoted women in prisons.† But of course our chief information is obtained from the early writers in the Eastern and Western parts of the Church. Many of them make mention of Deaconesses; not only those whom we have quoted, Epiphanius among the Greek writers, Tertullian among the Latin, but several others, both in the East and the West.‡ Besides these authorities,

* Plin. *Ep.* x. 97. † Luc. *De Morte Peregr.* iii. 335.

‡ It forms no part of our plan here to multiply quotations from the Fathers. We may just adduce what is said on the subject by Clemens Alexandrinus, who, rather strangely, is not mentioned by Bingham. He remarks (*Pæd.* iii. 12; I. p. 309, ed. Potter) that "in Scripture many precepts are "given to select persons (πρόσωπα ἐκλεκτά);" and these he specifies as Bishops, Priests, Deacons, *and Widows.* The incidental way in which this notice occurs should be remarked. In another place (*Strom.* iii. 6; I. p. 536) (and though his interpretation may be wrong, it is equally decisive as a proof of his familiarity with the institution of female deacons) he says that the women whom the Apostles (1 Cor.

we have decrees on the subject in various Councils, from the meeting of the Nicene Fathers down to the sixth century. The same office comes to view also, more than once, in the Codes both of Civil Law and the Canon Law. But besides this, there is another authority, which has hardly yet received the attention it deserves with regard to many questions of early Ecclesiastical History. We allude to the remarkable series of documents * which are known by the name of the "Apostolical "Constitutions." Whatever their real value in detail may be (and there is no doubt that in their present form they are largely interpolated and have been frequently modified), † we can hardly

ix. 5) took about with them, *συνδιακόνους ἐσομένας πρὸς τὰς οἰκουρούς γυναῖκας, δι' ὧν καὶ εἰς τὴν γυναικωνῖτιν ἀδιαβλήτως παρεισεδύετο ἡ τοῦ Κυρίου διδασκαλία*, were not as wives, but as sisters: for "we know," he continues, "all the directions "which Paul gives, *περὶ διακόνων γυναικῶν ἐν τῇ ἑ-έρᾳ πρὸς* "*Τιμόθεον ἐπιστολῇ*." It is curious that Clement mentions the wrong Epistle. The reference is doubtless, as Bp. Kaye thinks (*Clem. Al.* p. 464), to 1 Tim. iii. 11.

* Since this article was written these documents have been closely examined with the present question in view; and the result is given in Appendix IV.

† If it were the purpose of these pages to enter into a critical examination of the "Constitutions," it would be impossible to resist the temptation of discussing the speculations of W. Whiston, the successor of Sir Isaac Newton in his Professorship at Cambridge. His character was a curious mixture of vanity and honesty, credulity and scepticism.

hesitate to accept the following prayer as representing the spirit and general feeling of the Early Church in regard to Deaconesses. In fact, the prayer was probably used, on some occasions at least, when they were set apart to their office. Hence it is very important to quote it: —

> "Eternal God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
> "Creator both of Man and Woman, — who didst fill
> "with thy Holy Spirit Mary, Deborah, Anna, and
> "Huldah, — who didst not disdain that thy only be-
> "gotten Son should be born of a woman, who also in
> "the Tabernacle of Testimony and in the Temple
> "didst appoint women as the keepers of thy holy
> "gates; look now thyself on this thine handmaid, here
> "set apart for the office of a deaconess; give unto her
> "thy Holy Spirit, cleanse her from all impurity of the
> "flesh and of the spirit, and that she may worthily
> "accomplish the task now committed unto her, to thy

The second volume of his *Primitive Christianity Reviv'd*, containing an English translation of the Constitutions, was dedicated to Queen Anne under the style and title of "The "Catholic doctrine and the Constitutions of the Holy "Apostles, the unerring rule of that Christian Faith, whereof "her Majesty was the glorious Defender." The third volume, "wherein is proved that they are the most sacred of the "Canonical Books of the New Testament," is dedicated to the University of Oxford, and contains an Essay on the general subject. This was in 1711, a year in which the proceedings in Convocation were a curious anticipation of those which took place in reference to *Essays and Reviews* exactly 150 years later.

"glory and the praise of thy Christ, with whom to "thee and the Holy Spirit be glory and worship for "ever and ever. Amen." *

This, we contend, is an authentic trace of the true spirit of the primitive female diaconate; and we adduce it because we believe it has not generally been noticed. Indeed we doubt whether the passages relating to Deaconesses, either in the "Apostolical Constitutions," or in other early writings, have ever been analysed and combined as they ought to be.† This is peculiarly a subject for the elucidation of which the most casual allusions have a high value. Even faint traces and legendary fragments are deserving of some notice. As a specimen of a legend, we may mention one in the Coptic collection of the "Constitutions," which is worth something as having elicited from its commentator the remark that "In the Christian community wo-"man's weaker nature, when strengthened and "elevated by the respect and honour of the man, "developes a new and peculiar power, viz. that of "serving and suffering love." ‡

* *Apost. Const.* viii. 20.

† There is a German monograph (if only it can be found) on every subject in the world. We have placed that of Ziegler conspicuously at the head of our remarks. Our own Bingham, who is not less copious, does not seem to have been acquainted with his predecessor's work.

‡ Bunsen's *Hippolytus,* iii. 231. The legend itself is

If from the varied sources which have been indicated we gain the best impression of the general spirit of the Early Church in reference to Deaconesses, our best approach to a living picture of the institution will be obtained by examining one place and one period, in connection with the work of one eminent man. Materials for such an approximate picture exist in the records of the life of Chrysostom at Constantinople. His biography is remarkable for its many points of contact with female agency in the Church. His influence over women was one of the great features in his character. We have also some means of forming a conjecture concerning the number of Deaconesses in early times when we find that there were forty attached to the mother-church in Constantinople, and six connected with a small

given, ii. 307. Its main point is simply a saying of Martha to Mary, that "the weak, when comforted, become strong." It is pleasant to refer to Bunsen in regard to a practical subject where no difference of opinion need be expressed. His own pamphlet (*Elizabeth Fry an die deutschen Frauen u. Jungfrauen*, Hamb. 1842), written before the beginning of recent and painful controversies, must not be forgotten in an account of the Deaconess movement. See also *Die Kirche der Zukunft*, pp. 194, 422. The idea of the office in question is well expressed in the passage first referred to (*Hippol.* iii. 230, 231). "The office of Deacon, or helper, "implies, in the full sense of the word, the attendance on "the poor and the sick. To offer spiritual as well as bodily "aid, and, indeed, to supply all common wants, was the

church in the suburbs. And again, we can compare the extent of this female diaconate with that of the parallel ministry of the other sex, when we are told that there were a hundred deacons in this city.* There was a prevalent fancy in early times that there ought to be seven deacons in every church, after the precedent of the first institution.† But John Chrysostom was a man of enlarged views. He could distinguish between a rule and a principle; and he felt no difficulty in maintaining that a change in the condition of the Church might justify many changes of organization.

As regards the varied work of the Deaconesses under his superintendence, it is probably unnecessary to add anything to the general description already given. We may single out three indivi-

"individual duty of every Christian: and this divine idea of "services of charity had so deeply pervaded the mind of "the Church, that the office of Deacon and Deaconess grew "out of it. The latter were ordinarily widows; and the "Sisterhood of Widows is nothing more than that of "Deaconesses."

* We cannot give our authority for these statistics: but we have a confident recollection of having seen both statements made on what seemed authentic grounds.

† In the passage quoted above from Eusebius, it is stated that while there were forty-six presbyters at Rome and ninety-four of the lowest orders, there were only seven deacons and seven sub-deacons. See also Sozom. vii. 19. The tradition can still be traced in the present classification of the Cardinals.

duals as illustrations of Christian women doing good in co-operation with a Christian bishop of the fourth century.* One of these was Nicarete, an unmarried lady, who was unjustly deprived of the greater part of her wealth, but "by her ex-"cellent management contrived, even in her old "age, to have enough for herself and her servants, "and much also to spare for the indigent." She was full of "ability, benevolence, and resource," and was especially skilful "in preparing all kinds "of medicines, so that she gave relief to many poor "sufferers who had received no benefit from the "physicians." She was not a Deaconess. Her disposition was "modest, thoughtful, and retir-"ing," and she shrank from the responsibility of being placed in an official ecclesiastical position,† though Chrysostom often endeavoured to obtain her consent.

If Nicarete was a sample of the independent Christian lady, we have samples of the deaconess, strictly so called, in Pentadia and Olympias.‡

* The names of two others were Procula and Sylvana.

† *Εἰς ἀξίωμα διακόνου.*—Sozom. viii. 23. From this passage it is evident that the appointment was not restricted to widows. We may compare the case of Macrina, Gregory Nyssen's unmarried sister, who was a deaconess, and also that of Lampadia, whom the same writer mentions as being *ἐν τῷ τῆς διακονίας βαθμῷ.* This last phrase is seen to be important, if compared with 1 Tim. iii. 13.

‡ They were both widows.

When the great Bishop's troubles came, and he was forced to leave Constantinople for the exile in which he suffered so cruelly and so long, Pentadia wished to quit the city also, but he wrote to her firmly, and said that she ought not to abandon a place when her help might be so useful in relieving those who were the victims of persecution.* But the most conspicuous among all the women who laboured under this Bishop's superintendence was Olympias. She, in fact, is the queenly figure among the Deaconesses of the Primitive Church.† In consequence of the singular excellence of her character, she had been placed in the office at a very early age, by Chrysostom's predecessor.‡ To Chrysostom himself and to his work she was, in manifold ways, a source of sympathy and strength. The letters are very affecting in which he writes during his exile to tell her of his health. By her money he was enabled, in the midst of his own sufferings, to redeem Isaurian captives. For the great features of her character seem to have been generosity and courage. When Chrysostom entered on his duties at Constantinople, he found her giving her large fortune, with a reckless hand,

* Chrys. *Epist.* 104. (Vol. III. p. 649. Ed. Ben. 1738.) Two others of his extant letters are addressed to her.

† The phrase which Sozomen uses when he speaks of her is, Ὀλυμπιὰς ἡ διάκονος. See viii. 24, 27. ‡ Ib. viii. 9.

to those who were very undeserving and not really in distress; and a saying of his to her is recorded, which is full of truth for our times as well as theirs: — "If you give your wealth to "those who need it not, you might with equal "wisdom throw it into the sea. You have devoted "your property to God. Well, then you are God's "steward. You cannot depose yourself from your "responsibility of dispensing His wealth wisely for "Him." As to the courage of Olympias, this was shown when she was brought to trial under false accusations, on the banishment of Chrysostom. To charges regarding the misapplication of her property she replied, "My wealth was great, and "I spent it in building churches." When she was calumniated by the judge, "Do you, then," she said, "become my accuser, and let some one "else take the place of judge." By some of the chroniclers she is described as "the woman of "manly courage," * which is very far from being synonymous with "the woman of masculine "character." Such incidents and persons as these are well worth bringing out in more detailed description than can possibly be attempted here. It is very evident that the organization of Dea-

* Εἰς αἰσχύνην ἀνδρῶν ἀνδρεία γυνή. Pallad. *Dial.* Ib. vol. xiii. p. 64. And in an earlier passage: Μὴ λέγε γυνή, ἀλλ' οἷος ἄνθρωπος· ἀνὴρ γάρ ἐστι παρὰ τὸ τοῦ σώματος σχῆμα. (P. 59.)

conesses in the fourth century proceeded on very free and independent principles; and this one point is especially worthy of attention, that the women set apart for this office could retain the power of managing their own property.

Two questions of considerable interest arise out of this cursory review of the primitive institution of Deaconesses. We feel it important to ask, in the first place, with what formalities they were set apart to their office—whether they were strictly ordained or not—whether they were considered as lay or ecclesiastical persons. And, next, we are impelled to inquire why and when the institution was abolished. That it did cease to exist is certain, and the circumstances under which the change took place are matters of some consequence. Both these questions have very evident points of contact with the practical consideration of a female diaconate in England. It is right, therefore, to pause for a moment upon each of them.

Some members of the English Church would say that, if we have Deaconesses at all, they ought to be ordained and set apart with the utmost formality by episcopal authority. Others would contend that such an establishment of a separate "order" of women in the Church would be fatal to the whole scheme. The dilemma seems for-

midable; but a true view of the primitive theory of the subject is a help to escape, and suggests an intermediate course. It has been questioned by some whether the Deaconesses of early times were ordained by the laying on of hands.* There is sometimes a certain ambiguity about the terms employed; † and one passage, which touches the question closely, is involved in some doubt as to the reading.‡ We shall not, however, enter here

* In the discussion of subjects of this kind we are in the habit of referring, and very properly, to Hooker. It is curious that on this point he is not quite consistent. In one place he says that Widows and Virgins "neither did nor "could receive ordination," and that "to make them eccle-"siastical persons were absurd." *Eccl. Pol.* v. 78, 11. In another place we find the following: "The custom of the "Primitive Church in consecrating holy virgins and widows "unto the service of God is not obscure, but easy to be "known, both by that which St. Paul himself concerning "them hath (1 Cor. vii. 25; 1 Tim. v. 9), and by the latter "consonant evidence of other men's writings (Tertull. *de* "*vel. Virg.* c. 9). Now a part of the preeminence which "bishops had in their power of order was that by them "only such were consecrated." (vii. 6, 2.) In both cases he is arguing against the Puritans, who wished to retain official Widows, and to abolish Episcopacy, and who had the best of the argument in the former case, as they had the worst of it in the latter.

† Χειροτονία is primarily "election," and secondarily "imposition of hands." Χειροθεσία may be either "ordina-"tion" or simply "benediction."

‡ The allusion is to the 19th canon of the Council of

on any critical discussions. We have no doubt, on a review of the whole case, that these officers were set apart by the imposition of hands,* as we shall see to be the custom with the Protestant Deaconesses of modern Germany. But then a question arises as to the real import of this imposition of hands. The ceremony might have a double aspect. It might, according to circumstances, be a formal ordination, or simply express an act of solemn benediction. We are inclined to think that this distinction supplies the key to any difficulty which arises from the consideration of passages apparently conflicting. If the laying on of hands were originally understood to be applicable to women only in the lower sense, it was still evidently liable to abuse or misunderstanding. Deaconesses might place themselves, or be placed by others, in a false position. We cannot wonder if we find traces of this in the account given by Epiphanius of one of those strange Phrygian heresies in which female fanaticism was conspicuous. Even in the "Apostolical Constitutions"

Nice (A.D. 325). Two other very important canons are the 11th of that of Laodicæa (A.D. 372), and the 14th of that "in Trullo," (A.D. 692).

* See the proof of this, so far as the *Apostolical Constitutions* are concerned, in Appendix IV. We may particularly refer here to the distinction which seems to be drawn [illegible] documents between "Widows" and "Deaconesses."

it is said that "to ordain priestesses is hea-"thenish."* Thus we find stringent regulations made by Councils regarding the "ordination" of deaconesses. But it seems extremely probable that the practice fluctuated in different ages, and that there were variations of custom between the East and the West;† and at last we come to some French Councils, by which it was altogether abolished.‡ On the whole, it may be fairly concluded that in the general view of the primitive Church these female officers held a semi-ecclesiastical position. They were distinguished, by a very definite line of demarcation, from the clergy; they did not live in any monastic or con-

* *Ap. Const.* iii. 9.

† Jerome's words in two places are very important. On Rom. xvi. 1: "Sicut nunc *in Orientalibus* diaconissæ muli-"eres in quo sexu ministrare videntur in baptismo sive in "ministerio verbi." On 1 Tim. iii.: "Similiter eas ut "diacones eligi jubet. Unde intelligitur quod de his dicat "quas *adhuc hodie in Oriente* diaconissas appellant."—Ed. Ben. vol. v. pp. 972 and 1089.

‡ *First C. of Orange* (A. D. 441): "Diaconæ omnimodis "non ordinandæ: si quæ jam sunt, benedictioni quæ populo "impenditur, capita submittant." xxvi. (See Sirmond's note in Mansi.) *C. of Epaon* (A. D. 517, not 507 as it is given in Herzog): "Viduarum consecrationem, quas viduas vocitant, "*ab omni regione nostra* penitus abrogamus" (another reading is *religione*). xxi. *Second C. of Orleans* (A. D. 533): "Pla-"cuit ut nulli postmodum feminæ diaconalis benedictio "pro conditionis hujus fragilitate credatur." xviii.

ventual state; and yet, by reason of having prescribed duties connected with religion, they were, to some extent, separated from the laity.

It is evident, from what has been said, that we must be careful not to understand regulations having reference to details of "ordination" as though they were directed against the "order." It is probable that even the decrees of the French Councils were intended not to extinguish the institution of deaconesses, but to provide against their relative position being too prominent.* The abolition was doubtless gradual, and arose from more causes than one.† We need not hesitate to admit that there may have been abuses in this particular institution in an age when other ecclesiastical abuses were by no means infrequent. But we must remember that certain modifications of opinion and practice had been in progress which must necessarily have had an effect on a system of this kind. Infant baptism, which had been the exception at the first preaching of the Gospel, gradually became the rule: and, with

* Ziegler's words, with regard to these councils, are:—"Abrogata potius ordinatio, quæ invaluerat, quam diaconis-"sarum officium."—*De D. et D.* xxxvi.

† Canon Robertson in his *Church History* (p. 157), quoting the Roman Catholic Döllinger (i. 214) and the Protestant Augusti (xi. 220, 221), remarks that Deaconesses were found in the Church long after these French councils. Baronius mentions a case as late as A.D. 991.—*Ann. Eccl.* vol. xvi. p. 306.

this change, one of the functions of the deaconesses with regard to the female converts of course disappeared, and especially in proportion as sprinkling with water began to take the place of immersion. Moreover, it must be remembered that as time advanced the clergy became predominant; superstitious feelings were more and more associated with the idea of ordination, and the setting apart of women to parallel official duties would become more and more offensive. But we ourselves imagine the chief stress is to be laid on the progress of conventual monasticism, and that the system of free Deaconesses gave way before the more rigid Religious Orders, which grew into strength in the later and more corrupt ages of the Church; and this view derives some confirmation from the fact that the institution generally ceased in the West about the sixth century, whereas it continued in the East till the twelfth. If this supposition is correct, we have clearly an additional reason for looking on deaconesses with favour. Under whatever circumstances the abolition took place, two general facts are evident, both important from the English point of view: first, that the female diaconate is treated with less respect as we advance downwards in ecclesiastical history; and secondly, that it was held in esteem in the East longer than in the West.

This consideration of the subject in its primitive aspect prepares us to look at Scripture with clearer eyes and with closer attention. Approaching the subject in this historical way, we can hardly avoid the inference that the institution is Apostolic. It must have had its origin somewhere, and there is no record of it as a new thing suddenly appearing on the stage of history. On the contrary, the farther we advance from mediæval towards Apostolic times the clearer does our view of it become. We are far from saying that if it is Apostolic it is therefore imperative. But at least the proving, or even the probability, of this position gives a new and serious importance to the subject. Let us look, then, at the New Testament itself with the light which we have already obtained.

Now, in the first place, we cannot fail to be struck with the large number of women who were engaged in the work of spreading the Gospel, aiding the first Christian missionaries, or supplying the wants of the poor around them. In the Acts of the Apostles there are — *Dorcas*, of whom we know nothing except her good deeds; * *Priscilla*, who travelled with her husband; † *Lydia*, of whom we cannot say whether she was married

* Acts ix. 36.

† Acts xviii. 2, 26; Rom. xvi. 3; 1 Cor. xvi. 19; 2 Tim. iv. 19.

or not, but we find her at a considerable distance from her home;* and *Philip's daughters*, who were certainly unmarried.† There are others noticed in the Epistles, such as *Chloe*, who was evidently a person of some consequence at Corinth;‡ *Mary* and *Persis*, saluted in the Epistle to the Romans;§ *Tryphæna*, and *Tryphosa*, in the same Epistle, the mention of whose names occurs in such a way as to convey the impression of stated systematic work;‖ *Euodia* and *Syntyche* admonished, or, at least, advised, in that to the Philippians, and emphatically described as "having "laboured with the Apostle in the Lord;"⸸ and especially *Phœbe* of Cenchreæ, who has the official title — lost, indeed, in the English version, but in the original Greek, the official title — of "Dea-"coness."**

But it is most to our purpose to look at the Pastoral Epistles, because in them we have the institutions of the Apostolic Church in their more mature state, and because those letters have a

* Acts xvi. 14, 15, 40.

† Acts xxi. 9.

‡ 1 Cor. i. 11.

§ Rom. xvi. 6, 12.

‖ Rom. xvi. 12.

⸸ Such is the true connection of the words. Phil. iv. 2, 3.

** Rom. xvi. 1, 2. It is important to notice that she is called "a deaconess *of the church of Cenchreæ*," implying a local connection with a definite community. Cenchreæ was not a very large place, and it is natural to suppose that larger churches had several officers of this kind.

particular reference to subjects of this kind. There are three passages especially which invite our careful attention. In the Epistle to Titus, certain "aged women" are mentioned*, whose qualifications are very much the same as those required elsewhere of presbyters and bishops, especially in regard to their being "apt to teach." This circumstance might at first sight seem of no great moment, but we are inclined to attend to it a little more closely when we notice that the word translated "aged women" is not that which elsewhere in the Pastoral Epistles is rendered "elder "women,"† but is precisely one of the terms employed by primitive Greek writers as an official designation of those who did the work of deaconesses.‡ So of the "widows" mentioned in the

* *Πρεσβύτιδας.*—Tit. ii. 3.

† *Πρεσβυτέρας.*—1 Tim. v. 2.

‡ Here, however, it must be admitted that there is some doubt. The context, relating as it does to the natural classes into which society is divided, rather than to official distinctions, forbids us to lay too much stress on the point. Nor can we fortify our view by an array of commentators. Herzog, however, agrees with us. The passage again reminds us (especially in the words *καλοδιδασκάλους* and *σωφρονίζωσιν*) of one in the *Pastor* of Hermas (ii. vis. 2) *Γράπτη νουθετήσει τὰς χήρας καὶ τοὺς ὀρφάνους.* Whatever be the origin and history of this work, we have here, in some early period of the Church, a trace of the office for which we are contending. Hefele says of Grapte, "Diaconissa fuisse videtur." —*Pat. Apost.* p. 333.

First Epistle to Timothy,* as placed on a definite "list" or "roll," we observe that their qualifications are remarkably like those required of Presbyters. At first sight we might be disposed to think only of widows registered for the receipt of relief, such as those for whom Dorcas made garments,† or those whose complaints are recorded in the sixth chapter of the Acts.‡ But when we look well at the whole context, when we notice the limitations

* 1 Tim. v. 9.

† Acts ix. 39. It has been suggested that Dorcas herself may have been an official widow, the words πᾶσαι αἱ χῆραι seeming to point to such a καράλογος, as is implied (1 Tim. v. 9) as existing at Ephesus. See a sermon on the *Apostles and the Offertory*, by Rev. H. E. Tweed, p. 20.

‡ Acts vi. 1. Here, however, Mosheim (*De Reb. Christ. ante Const.* p. 138, n.) maintains that the complaining widows were Hellenist deaconesses, and that the complaint arose from the fact that larger funds for the poor were supplied to the Hebrew deaconesses. He remarks that there must have been other poor besides widows, and asks why the widows only should have been neglected. When this note was first written, Mosheim's view was called "a curious "theory." It has since been noticed, however, that the same view is held by two different, and very independent authorities. See Bp. Hinds (*Rise and Progress of Christianity*, pp. 142, 383), who remarks that deaconesses would be required very early in the Church, and that those females, who from their poverty and widowhood were deriving support from the Church, would naturally be employed in this capacity, according to the apostle's precept, "If any work "not, neither shall he eat." With this compare Baronius. *Ann. Eccl.* sub ann. A. D. 34; (i. pp. 211, 212).

of age,* and when we read that verse which speaks of danger, in the case of younger widows, of setting aside their "first faith" or "original pledge" given to Christ, we seem to see along with the receipt of support from the Church, *correlative duties* also implied; we seem to discover traces (as we have observed in post-apostolic times) of an order of Widows, not identical perhaps with the Deaconesses, but belonging to a different department of the same kind of organization.† It appears to us,

* It would seem hard to exclude all widows under sixty, however destitute, from relief. The description, too, of the "widows" before us almost implies that they were not always destitute. How strange also to advise a second marriage to the younger widows, and yet to exclude from the "roll" all who had been twice married!

† Professor Ellicott remarks that the duties of these "widows" were probably "presbyteral rather than dia-"conic." We think it important to remark, that he and Dean Alford and Dr. Wordsworth, the three best modern English commentators on the Pastoral Epistles, take entirely our view of this passage. Dr. Wordsworth concludes a long and useful note with the following words: "We "may also be permitted to cherish a hope that these Apos-"tolic counsels may hereafter bear more abundant fruit "than is now the case. The offices of the *Deaconess* and "of the *Widow* are here commended by the Holy Spirit to "the reverent regard and affectionate use of the Church. "It is much to be regretted that these offices have fallen "almost into desuetude, by reason of the human corruptions "by which the divine counsels of the Apostle have been "marred, especially from the imposition of vows of celi-

however, that the chief stress is to be laid on a third passage, the significance of which is often unnoticed. We mean the eleventh verse of the third chapter of this Epistle.* This verse occurs in the midst of a long passage relating to the diaconate. The deacons are mentioned above, and immediately again below. We need hardly say that the expression "wives" in the English Version is of no authority. The word is simply "women;" and the question is whether women in general are intended, or the wives of the deacons, or female deacons. It should be particularly noticed that in the early part of the chapter no such directions are given concerning the wives of the bishops or presbyters, though they are

"bacy. The abuses by which these offices have been "blemished, have entailed on the Church a forfeiture "of the benefits derivable from the offices themselves. "But it is the part of true Reformation to separate the "abuses of things from the things themselves that are "abused. And it would be a blessed work of Christian "Charity to restore the office of *Widow* and *Deaconess* in "the Church to their primitive simplicity; and so to en-"gage the affections and sympathies, and to exercise the "quiet piety and devout zeal, of Christian women, old and "young, in the service of Christ, in a regular and orderly "manner, under the guidance of lawful Authority, and with "its commission and benediction, according to the Apostolic "model prescribed by the Holy Ghost."

* Here again our three commentators are in agreement with us.

certainly quite as important as the wives of the deacons. We hold it almost certain that a candid and thoughtful student, looking carefully over the whole ground, and taking in his hand the light obtained from the facts of the early Church, will come to the conclusion that a *female diaconate* * is here implied — an order of deaconesses working co-ordinately with the deacons, though, of course less prominently and publicly.

On the whole, is it not tolerably evident that we have the same kind of Scriptural argument, (we do not say the same strength of Scriptural argument) for the institution of deaconesses that we have for the threefold hierarchy of Bishops, Priests, and Deacons † — and that the setting apart of women in this way, so far as the Bible is

* The word διάκονος is inclusive of both sexes: and we observe that the women are introduced in ver. 11 as a new class by the same word, ὡσαύτως, as the men in ver. 8. In Phil. i. 1, it is quite possible that the generic term may include the women so pointedly mentioned in iv. 2, 3. In the *Apost. Const.* we find ὁ διάκονος and ἡ διάκονος side by side. The feminine form διακόνισσα occurs there also, and is frequently found elsewhere, as in Epiphanius and the decrees of the Nicene Council.

† It is worth remarking that Phœbe is called a Deaconess, but that Stephen is never called a Deacon. And further, if Phil. i. 1 does include deacons of both kinds, the "woman-deacon" is actually mentioned oftener in Scripture by the official title, than the "man-deacon."

concerned, rests on the same kind of foundation as the observance of the Sabbath on Sunday or the practice of Infant Baptism? Of the first of these points we are content to say,* "that it is evident "unto all men diligently reading Holy Scripture "and ancient Authors, that from the Apostles' time "there have been these three Orders of Ministers in "Christ's Church,"—of the second, that, presuming the obligation of the Sabbath to be perpetual, we traditionally accept a change of day, for which we can imagine very good reasons, but which is nowhere very clearly explained,—of the third, (in the moderate words of our Twenty-seventh Article †), that the "Baptism of young Children is "in any wise to be retained, as most agreeable with "the institution of Christ." Even a warm advocate for the establishment of deaconesses might be satisfied to put the subject on a lower level than this. We can indeed imagine some persons saying, when the argument for the institution is so strong, (and certain of the Puritan party two hundred and fifty years ago ‡ did almost imply this) that it

* Pref. to Ordination Services.

† No doubt the Baptismal Services are to be added to the Article to give full expression to the view of the Church of England. But we contend that we could justify on the same general ground, both Deaconesses and prayers connected with their appointment.

‡ See what Abp. Bancroft calls "*a sort of disciplinary* "*widowists*," one of whom "always comprehendeth the

must be positively wrong to abandon it. But it is best, even as a matter of policy, to understate a case which has to contend with prejudices. And the Bible is, on the whole, very silent as to ecclesiastical details. In matters of this kind it gives us rather principles for adaptation to circumstances than rules which are to keep us in bondage. All that we contend for is, that we probably suffer loss, by being without one of the ecclesiastical helps which the Apostles sanctioned — that, if Scripture is faint enough to excuse the dispensing with it, it is strong enough to authorize its renewal — and that the burden of proof rests on the opponent, not the advocate, of deaconesses.

Such we conceive to be the Scriptural bearing of our subject. We might, however, have doubted the cogency of our own reasoning, if no attempt had been made since the Reformation to act practically on this view, and to revive the Female Diaconate. We proceed now to give an account of some such attempts, with which we have made

" widows, and nameth them as necessary parts of the form " of that church-government which Christ and His Apostles " have appointed to be the ordinary and perpetual platform " for guiding and governing His Church until the end of the " world: and maketh them, by such force as his arguments " have, as necessary for the ordinary continuance of them, " as either Pastor, Doctor, Elders or Men-Deacons."—*Survey of the Pretended Holy Discipline*, p. 177.

ourselves well acquainted. They are in active progress now, they can be tested and re-examined, and therefore are more to our purpose than any previous efforts in the earlier parts of the history of Protestantism.

Not that early efforts have been wanting, even in our own country, quite sufficient for the purposes of our argument. The literature of our Reformation is by no means destitute of allusions to the subject, though the time might not be favourable to reorganization in detail. We can illustrate the matter, in passing, from the writings of two successive Lady Margaret Professors, and two successive Archbishops of Canterbury.

Few things are better known to the students of that period than the controversies of Whitgift and Cartwright. It is curious that the two opponents, though they found it necessary to contradict one another on this point, as on others, together supply a very complete statement and even justification of what we need in regard to deaconesses. Cartwright contends that in the early Church there were "two "kinds" of deacons, some of whom "called dea-"cons" had charge over all the poor of the Church, while some had charge over the "poor strangers," and those "poor which were sick" only. "And "those," he says, "St. Paul calleth in one place "(Rom. xvi. 1) *deaconesses*, and in another place "(1 Tim. v. 10) *widows*. For the deacons did

"distribute unto the necessities as well of the poor "strangers and the sick poor, as unto the other poor "of the church; and the widows did employ their "labours to the washing of the feet of the strangers, "and attending upon the poor which were sick and "had no friends to keep them." To which Whitgift replies: "There is no great matter in all this, "saving only that I would gladly learn where the "office of widows and deaconesses is restricted to "poor strangers only and such as be sick; *seeing* "*that the other poor, that be neither strangers* "*nor sick, may need their help in sundry things as* "*well as they*; and seeing also that neither in Rom. "xvi. nor in 1. Tim. v. (which you quoted in the "margent) there is any such restraint made, or to "be gathered, but the contrary almost in express "words." *

What follows a little afterwards is also well worth quoting, if it were only for the sake of an entertaining relief in the details of a dry argument. Cartwright argues thus, as regards the official widows: "These, as they are nour-"ished at the charges of the church, being poor, "so did they serve the church in attending "upon poor strangers, and the poor which were "sick in the church whereof they were widows. "Now although there is not so great use of these

* *Works of Abp. Whitgift*, vol. iii. p. 281 (Parker Soc.).

"widows with us, as there was in those places "where the churches were first founded, and in "that time wherein this order of widows was in-"stituted, part of the which necessity grew both "by the multitude of strangers through the per-"secution, and by the great heat of those east "countries, whereupon the washing and suppling "of their feet was required; yet forsomuch as "there are poor which are sick in every church, I "do not see how a better and more convenient "order can be devised for the attendance of them "on their sickness and other infirmities, than this "which St. Paul appointeth, that there should be (if "there can any be gotten) godly poor widows of "the age which St. Paul appointeth, which should "attend upon such." He adds that since such widows "must needs live of the charge of the "church," it is fit they should do some duty for it, and that he can quote men "as learned as "any that this age has brought forth," who think "that *the institution of widows is perpetual* and "ought to be when it may be had, and where "such widows are found. Indeed," he concludes, "they are more rare now than in the Apostles' "times: for then, by reason of the persecution, "those which had the gift of continency did ab-"stain from marriage after the death of their "husbands." To all this Whitgift says in answer, or rather, we might almost say, in concession:

"Here you are taken in your own trap, and fain "would you wring yourself out, if you could tell "which way; for if all things contained in St. "Paul his first Epistle to Timothy be perpetual, "then of necessity the Church must still retain "widows. You know not in the world how to avoid "this absurdity, and therefore sometimes you say "'that now there is not so great use,' &c.; and by "and by you begin to call that back, and say that "you 'do not see how a better and more conve-"'nient order can be devised,' &c.; and in the "end you 'conclude that (if any such can be "'gotten) we ought also to keep that order,' &c. "Surely if it be an order appointed of God to be "perpetual, and contained under that denunciation "to Timothy in the sixth chapter, these 'ifs' and "'ands' can take no place; for *there are widows "good store in this realm of England;* so that "excuse will not serve." * If we add what Cartwright says of the Scriptural basis of this female ministration, and of the impropriety of obliterating it from the Church, to what Whitgift says of the variety of offices which such ministers might discharge and of the supply of such ministers which we may expect from our own country—very little is wanting to the completeness of our argument. We have only to remark that St. Paul's

* *Works of Abp. Whitgift,* vol. iii. pp. 292, 293 (Parker Soc.).

Epistles by no means represent the deaconesses or widows, as necessarily poor.*

Bancroft has been quoted already.† And it is very observable, as a contrast to what has taken place in our own times, that the official employment of women in the church was most advocated by those who were most vehement in their Protestantism,‡ and while Sisterhoods have been promoted lately by those who sometimes too

* Not only do some of the characteristics of "widows" in 1 Tim. imply competent worldly means, but of Phœbe it is said that she had been a προστάτις of many.

† See above, p. 59, note.

‡ Bullinger's *Decades* represent, with some degree of authority, the strongly-pronounced Protestantism of that day. His words are, after saying that deacons are not to be reckoned in the order of pastors (for that the ancient fathers referred them to the ministry, but not to the priesthood): "We read also that women, not wedded, but "widows, ministered in the primitive church; and among "others, Phebe, of the church of Cencrea, highly praised "of the Apostle, is very famous. (Rom. xvi.) But he "forbiddeth women to teach in the church and to take "upon them public offices. (1 Cor. xiv.) How, therefore, "or in what thing, did women minister in the church? "Undoubtedly they ministered unto the poor in duties "appertaining to women. They ministered unto the sick; "and with Martha, Christ's hostess, they did with great "care and diligence cherish the members of Christ; for "what other offices could they have?" v. 3, vol. v. p. 107 (Parker Soc.), where the reference is wrongly given, in both the general and the special index.

lightly use the term "Puritan" in reproach, the actual organization of a female diaconate was effected by the Puritans themselves.*

But on the Continent such early efforts have been more marked; and they too must be noticed in passing; for they are well worth studying. They have been more or less alluded to in pamphlets published recently in England; but the quotations seem to have been given traditionally, without any reference to original authorities. We have made it our business to inquire into this subject, and we can at least indicate the places where the fullest information is to be obtained. We believe that it was in the Sixth Report of the "Institution "des Diaconesses," in Paris, that general attention was called to the Establishment of the "Demoi-

* In the year 1575 this regulation was passed by an assembly of sixty ministers of the eastern counties, and remitted for their direction to their several parishes. "Touch-"ing *deacons of both sorts*, viz. *men and women*, the church "shall be admonished what is required by the Apostle; "and that they are not to choose men of custom or course, "or for their riches, but for their faith, zeal, and integrity; "and that the church is to pray in the mean time to be so "directed, that they may choose them that are meet. Let "the names of those that are thus chosen be published the "next Lord's-day, and after that, their duties to the church, "and the church's duty towards them; *then let them be re-"ceived into their office with the general prayers of the whole "church.*"—Neal's *History of the Puritans*, vol. i. p. 304 (ed. of 1793).

"selles de Charité," in the Principality of Sédan. But the fullest collection of instances is to be found in two papers by Dr. Fliedner of Kaiserswerth, published in 1849 and 1854 respectively in the *Armen- und Kranken-Freund*, an excellent periodical, which we desire to make generally known. In the first of these papers, after quoting Luther abundantly, he gives illustrations of the employment of women in semi-ecclesiastical functions not in England only,* but in Holland, during the time of the Puritans. The following passage from an American source is an amusing picture of an old Dutch Deaconess: — "In Amsterdam "there were about three hundred communicants, "and they had for pastors and teachers two ad- "mirable men (Smith and Robinson), and four "honourable men as ruling elders; also three "active and godly men for Deacons, and one aged "widow for Deaconess, who served among them "many years, though she was sixty years old when "she was chosen. She filled her office worthily, "and was an honour to the congregation. She "sat commonly in a convenient place in the "church, with a little birchen rod in her hand, "and held the little children in much awe, so that "they disturbed not the assembly. She diligently "visited the sick and the infirm, especially those of

* See preceding note.

"the female sex, and called our younger women, "in case of need, to watch over them at night, and "to give other assistance that might be required: "and, if they were poor, she made collections for "them among those who were in a condition to "give, or informed the Deacons of the case. She "was obeyed as a mother in Israel, and a true "handmaid of the Lord." *

But still greater importance is to be attached to Dr. Fliedner's second paper, in which, from formal archives kept between 1575 and 1610, he furnishes details of the female diaconate at Wesel. The congregation of this place consisted of Protestant refugees from the Low Countries and elsewhere; and we find that one of its first acts was to decide that women were to be officially employed by the presbytery among the poor and the sick. The word "deaconess" was systematically used, and the formal choice of one and another, whose names are given, is recorded at frequent intervals. After 1610 all traces of this institution was lost. The causes of its decay,

* *A. und K. F.* for Dec. 1849, p. 15. A retranslation labours under some difficulties. The original passage is in Dr. Young's *Chronicles of the Pilgrim Fathers of Plymouth,* Second Edition, Boston U.S. (pp. 455, 456). Dr. Fliedner met with this information in a journey which he took to America for the purpose of establishing some deaconesses in Pennsylvania.

assigned by Dr. Fliedner, are instructive. They are four in number, — the introduction of a system of State-relief for the poor in place of the free exertions of the Church,—the enactment of a new rule that no one but women of sixty years of age should be chosen*— the custom of very generally employing married women, and, lastly, the near approach of the sad calamities of the Thirty Years' War. We might with advantage dwell longer on these historical notices. We might also adduce important illustrations of the employment of female agency by the United Brethren, or Moravians.† But we hasten to give some account

* It is worth while to pause on this point. The "widows" of 1 Tim. v. 9 must not (as seems to have been the case at Wesel) be absolutely identified with the "deaconesses" of 1 Tim. iii. 11 and Rom. xvi. 1. The age of the former must have unfitted them for many laborious duties.

† We are far from saying that nothing is to be learnt on this subject outside the limits of Reformed Christendom. But we have purposely limited ourselves to what is unequivocally Protestant. For some interesting historical notices of the early organization of female charity in the Latin Church we may refer to Mrs. Jameson, pp. 19—34. An account of the Béguines in Belgium will be found in Southey's *Colloquies*, vol. ii. pp. 326—334. Nor can we in justice leave this point without referring to a comprehensive little book entitled *Hospitals and Sisterhoods* (London, 1854), which contains a very full account of existing orders and institutions of women, both Protestant and Roman Catholic. In what we have here written ourselves, we have drawn

of a few of those Deaconess Institutions of the Continent, which are at this moment full of vigorous life, and are the real practical comment upon the theory with which we have hitherto been occupied.

The first place and the fullest description are due to KAISERSWERTH. The Deaconess Institution in this Rhenish town was the earliest in point of time, and in most respects, though not in all, it has been the type and pattern of the rest. There is moreover almost a romantic interest connected with the name of Kaiserswerth, partly because Miss Nightingale is known to have received some of her training there, and partly because the poetical feeling connected with the vague idea of a deaconess is naturally associated with the name that is most familiarly known. Certainly there is nothing romantic in the place itself. In the most featureless part of Germany, except indeed that the famous river is a grand feature which redeems from monotony even level corn-fields and formal rows of poplars — and in a small town which is as commonplace as any that could be found on the Continent — here it is that, under Dr. Fliedner's auspices, the modest but convenient buildings have gradually

entirely from our own inquiries, without using the materials in this book. But we know that it is a most useful manual, and that it ought to be well studied.

risen, which now embrace a hospital, a penitentiary, an orphan-house, an infant-school, a training-school for mistresses, an asylum for insane women, and a home for aged deaconesses; here it is that a remarkable scene is presented of Christian love, cheerfulness, simplicity, courtesy, wisdom, and work.

Several descriptions, more or less copious, of these establishments have been published in England; so that general information on the subject is easily within reach.* Our own description shall be as much condensed as possible; and we believe we shall be most useful if we simply notice such characteristics of the history and condition of Kaiserswerth as are in some kind of parallelism with parts of our home experience, or have some kind of relation with the subjects which engage our thoughts at the present time in England.

We must first remark that the enterprise has grown from the very smallest beginning, and that its extraordinary development has been the gradual result of new encouragements and suggestions. It is curious to observe, when we think of the Crimean War, that one encouragement in the midst of the early difficulties arose from the re-

* *Account of the Institution for Deaconesses* (London 1851), known to be by Miss Nightingale. *Kaiserswerth Deaconesses.* By a Lady. (London 1857); also *Hospitals and Sisterhoods.*

membrance of the self-devotion of the German ladies in the War of 1813–15.* Then came the thought of the Primitive Deaconesses.† From the time that the effort was fairly on foot, it is evident that there has been a very distinct conception in Fliedner's mind, not only that he was endeavouring to supply a modern want in a lawful, judicious, and effectual manner, but that he was restoring something which had existed in the early Church. He returns to this point again and again, in his numerous publications on the subject of deaconesses.

The progress of the work itself was as follows: —In 1822 he was appointed pastor of the small Protestant congregation at Kaiserswerth. The bankruptcy of the manufacturing firm, upon which nearly the whole of this congregation depended, led him to make a journey to England for the purpose of obtaining funds. There he met Mrs. Fry, and became interested in the subject of prisons. On his return he established a society in Rhenish Prussia for the improvement of prison discipline. Thus he came in contact with the serious subject of discharged female prisoners. He began with one of this class, with a single lady to help him, in a small summer-house, with one table, two beds, and two chairs. This summer-

* *Kurze Geschichte der Enstehung der ersten evang. Liebes-Anstalten zu Kaiserswerth*, p. 9. † Ib. p. 10.

house, which still stands in the parochial minister's garden at Kaiserswerth,* is the true parent-house of all the deaconess institutions of Germany. From the female prisoner the sympathizing heart and organizing mind turned to the destitute child, and from the destitute child to the sick and the dying. The obstacles were many; but the encouragements came gradually and often unexpectedly. So the tree grew from the smallest of seeds. From the last report we find, that, besides the thirty-one sisters attached to the institutions on the spot, there are sixty in various parts of the Rhine-Province, thirty-three in the Westphalian, forty-eight in other provinces of Prussia, and fourteen in other parts of Germany; and besides these twenty-seven others, who are distributed far beyond the limits of Germany, at Constantinople, Bucharest, Smyrna, Jerusalem, Alexandria, and Pittsburg, in Pennsylvania.† It may be truly said of Pastor Fliedner, that, "with his staff," he crossed the Jordan of his first difficulties, and that now he is become "two bands."‡ His is a rare and happy lot. His hands "laid the foundation" of this house. "His hands have also finished it." §

* The Jubilee Report (See Pref.) has for a frontispiece the old Summer-House and the present Great Hospital side by side, with Matt. xiii. 31, as a motto below.

† On the increase since this was written, see note below, p. 83. ‡ Gen. xxxii. 10. § Zech. iv. 9.

Here we must notice a very important principle on which Dr. Fliedner has proceeded in building up these institutions. He has been careful to keep them in close association with the ecclesiastical authorities. The Rhine Provinces and Westphalia, which are divided by the river, and are nearly equal in extent, seem to have a more free Protestant church-government than the northern and eastern parts of Prussia. This circumstance has perhaps been favourable to the formation of a "Rhenish-Westphalian Deaconess-Society" of a distinctly ecclesiastical and almost official character.* The civil government, however, has not been slow to recognise the value of the work which has its centre at Kaiserswerth. Important privileges were accorded in 1846 to the above-mentioned Society. Dr. Fliedner and his son-in-law Dr. Disselhoff have been formally appointed chaplains of the Deaconess-Institution; and in 1852 the King of Prussia himself laid the foundation of what we have called the Home — *Feierabend-Haus* — the house where the aged deaconesses are to spend the "holiday evening" of their days.

It is time now that we say something of the

* The connection (to use an obvious illustration) is closer and more official than that which subsists between the Church of England and the Society for Propagating the Gospel.

prevailing spirit and internal organization of this Deaconess-Institution. The first point which will strike any one who examines into the inner life which pervades it is its strongly marked religious character. The direct work of the deaconesses has reference, in the first place, to the body; but the great end which is set before them is the benefit of the souls of those to whom they minister. Thus, while they are trained in all that relates to teaching and nursing, they have a very minute and systematic course of religious instruction, and careful provision is made for maintaining and fostering an earnest and personal devotion. The temptation is great to illustrate these facts by copious extracts from a rich collection of materials. This temptation must be resisted; but some quotations will be expected from us in justification of what we have said; and not a few of our readers will be anxious also to be informed of the *kind* of religion which presides over Kaiserswerth. Perhaps the best extract for serving both purposes in a brief space is one which we take from the early pages of the Official Regulations.* There is what might be called, from its frequent occurrence in the authorized books, the Kaiserswerth formula, which presents to us the function of deaconesses in the form of a definition. They are to be, as

* *Haus-Ordnung u. Dienst-Anweisung für die Diakonissen u. Probeschwestern*, pp. 2—5.

their name implies, servants, and specifically (1) servants of the Lord Jesus Christ — (2) servants of the poor, the sick, and the young, for the sake of the Lord Jesus — (3) servants one among another. This formula, as we have ventured to call it, is prominent in the "Consecration-Service."* In the "Regulations," which we quote, the following explanatory sentences occur under the three several heads, fortified in each case by a series of texts from Scripture: —

"1. *The Deaconess as Servant of the Lord Jesus.* "The love of Christ constrains every true Christian "henceforth to live no longer to himself, but to Him "who died for him and rose again: hence every Deaconess "must care for and teach the poor, the sick, and the "young; not for the sake of earthly reward or earthly "honour, but out of thankful love to Him who also "bore her sicknesses, and took her sufferings on Him-"self. She must strive to do all in the name of Jesus, "for His sake, after His example, and in His service.

"2. *The Deaconess as Servant of the Poor, the Sick, "and the Young, for the Lord's sake.* She must cherish "towards them, in her heart, pity, friendliness, gentle-"ness, and patience, and even such humility as though "they were her masters. But she must demean her-"self as their handmaid, not for their sakes, but for "the Lord's sake; not therefore to obtain their praise, "but out of love and humility towards the Lord, "whose representatives she sees in them. Hence in "serving them she must never so yield to them as to

* *Einsegnung der Diakonissen*, pp. 10—13.

"strengthen their obstinacy, daintiness, ill-temper,
"envy, or other evil disposition, but must ever keep
"in view the hope of winning their souls to the Lord.
"3. *Deaconesses as Servants one among another.* In
"living together and working together, they must be,
"after the example of the Lord, who became our
"servant, and according to His command, servants
"one among another, must do nothing through envy
"or vain-glory, but with mutual humility esteem
"each the other higher than herself; and look not on
"her own things, but also on those of the others; so
"that whoever will be great, yea, the highest among
"them all may be the handmaid of all."

In further elucidation at once of the theological complexion and religious earnestness of the work conducted by Dr. Fliedner, we might adduce the beautiful intercessory Litany at the end of the Kaiserswerth Hymn Book,* the solemn appeal at the end of the Regulations,† the sensible and searching rules for self-examination,‡ the meditations preparatory to the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper,§ and the answers which have been given on various occasions to different classes of opponents.‖ As to the internal government, it is

* *Diakonissen-Liederbuch*, p. 312.

† *Haus-Ordnung*, pp. 87, 88. ‡ Ib. p. 81.

§ *Liederbuch*, p. 311. See *Einsegnung*, p. 15.

‖ To meet the prejudices of those who contended that the institution was inconsistent with Protestant principles, the Consecration-Service (*Einsegnung der Diakonissen*) has been published, with a preface. See pp. i. and iii. As to more

altogether in the hands of Fliedner and his wife, who herself wears the costume of the deaconesses, and is their mother as he is their father. How much may be relatively due to her in the matter of management, how much to him, it is difficult to say. He, however, must be spoken of as the great modern founder of the system. In character Fliedner is a calm, strong, devout man, thoroughly sensible, quite above the folly of running risks by imitating Popery, and equally above the folly of rejecting a really good thing because it may be called Popery. He purposely avoided such terms as "novice" and "superior." When Mrs. Fry proposed an institution in London of "Protestant Sisters of Charity," he warned her that the designation would be dangerous. The dress worn by Roman Catholic "sisters" being commonly black, he chose another colour. And no one who has seen the blue gown, plain white collar, and neat cap of the Kaiserswerth deaconesses will hesitate to say that they are in harmony with the

philosophical opponents, who, in fact, accused Fliedner of being too evangelical, an important passage, having reference to the Atonement, the old fashioned orthodox view of which is held at Kaiserswerth, is found at p. vii. of the Preface to the Collection of the Reports of the first ten years. In reference to the devotional habits of the place, one critic seems to have said,—"The Institution works wonderfully; but "it is a pity they pray there so much."

happy faces and quiet self-possession of those who wear them.*

It must not, however, be imagined that the discipline of the institution is loose or irregular. The conditions under which a Probationer is received are extremely strict. The time of probation itself is a considerable interval, involving various duties, and often ending in rejection.† The consecration is most solemn, with the laying on of hands at a special service in the chapel, in presence of the whole community. Though there are no vows, obedience to those who have the direction of departments is expected and strictly required. Two ideas seem to have presided over all the working life of Dr. Fliedner; first, that a *female* "Diakonie" is required by the Church of modern times, and secondly, that this "Diakonie," to be efficient, must be *trained*. In the case, for instance, of grievous sickness, "How," he said to us, "unless she is instructed and prepared, can "the Deaconess administer at night those spiritual "drops which are often worth more than a whole "sermon." Though there are beautiful liturgical

* At the recent Deaconess-Conference it was remarked that blue was chosen under the feeling that it fitly repre-"sented the "cheerful and serene spirit" of Protestantism (dass Blau die Heiterkeit der evang. Kirche würdig repräsentire). *Conf.* p. 61.

† Pastor's Fliedner's statement is that about one half of his probationers retire.

elements in the public services of the community,* the prayers used by the Sisters with those among whom they minister are extemporaneous; and for these prayers they are taught that they must prepare themselves, in order that the words may be suitable to each special case. Hence the importance of the early years of residence, involving, as they do, both a training of the character through methodical habits and opportunities of devotion, and a training of the mind by a methodical course of religious teaching. We must not follow these two parts of the Kaiserswerth discipline into details. In regard to the former, we will only mention the beautiful custom of what is called there "the quiet half-hour" (*die stille halbe Stunde*), when all members of the community who can be spared from their varied duties, meet in the chapel for meditation and prayer, in silence, but together. As to the latter, we feel absolutely forced to mention the admirable manual of Scripture reading (*Bibel-Lese-Tafel*), one of the best we have ever seen, in which the sacred text is classified and arranged in two methods according to the order of the ecclesiastical year, and according to the spiritual needs of various kinds of characters. In fact, if we were to single out one religious peculiarity of Kaisers-

* These are given at the end of the *Liederbuch*, and also printed separately.

werth as conspicuous above the rest, it would be the close and discriminating study of the Bible.

From the discipline which we have imperfectly described there results as one important consequence, a remarkable *esprit de corps* among the members of the community, wherever scattered. "We have no vows," said Pastor Fliedner to us, "and I will have no vows: but a bond of union "we must have: and the best bond is the Word of "God." This principle is practically realized by means of the above-mentioned Bible-Manual, which is not only a companion to his course of instruction, and a classified arrangement of Scripture passages with a view to edification, but is used daily and simultaneously by the Deaconesses at all their stations. "And our second bond," he added, "is singing." * The former link would be applicable to any association of Christian fellow-labourers in England. The latter would perhaps, in our case, hardly be strong enough to be really useful. But the stores of the Hymn Book and the habit of Vocal Music are powerful religious forces in Germany; and Kaiserswerth, as we have seen, has its own Book of Sacred Song to aid in binding together those whose fields of labour may be widely separated. Nor are these

* In both these respects the custom of the Moravians or United Brethren may be adduced as an illustration.

the only provisions for maintaining a loyal and affectionate feeling among the members of the community.* Frequent conferences take place of the Chaplains and Sisters together, for discussing new plans, for ascertaining the success which has been attained, and for hearing tidings of the distant stations. The Sisters themselves have a veto upon the election of each new Deaconess. Each birthday is carefully commemorated. Every year a calendar † is published, which may be seen hung up at all the stations, and which notes under its own date each successive step in the past history of this remarkable work. Thus

* Much stress was laid at the recent Conference on the frequent visitation of those Deaconesses who are at out-stations, for the purpose of "strengthening their spirits in "their lonely and difficult positions." It was remarked, too, that the visits of experienced Sisters are more fruitful of good results than the visits of Chaplains, "for to the "former the Sisters open their hearts more willingly." Here the example of Count Zinzendorf and the United Brethren was quoted at the meeting, pp. 72—75.

† *Stationen-Kalender der Diakonissen-Anstalt zu Kaiserswerth am Rhein.* Elsewhere, the union between the Parent-Institution and the out-stations is promoted by a periodical, giving an account of each step in the progress of the work, and intermingled with extracts tending to edification. We have now before us the *Correspondenzblatt der Diakonissen von Neuendettelsau* for three years (1858—60). This is one of the more recent institutions, founded in Bavaria in 1854.

the corporate feeling is strong, though the members are scattered; and a happy and cheerful allegiance to the "Mother-House" is everywhere maintained. The emblem of the dove with the olive branch, which is a familiar wood-cut on the printed papers of Kaiserswerth, is suggestive not only of the character and mission of those who are sent forth, but of the Home to which all of them belong.

Before we visited Kaiserswerth itself, we had an opportunity at Bonn of noticing this loyalty of feeling at a small hospital, which is situated in an open and healthy place at the south side of the town, full in view of Godesberg and the Drachenfels. Here first we saw the blue gowns, and heard of the "Mother-House." This is one of the smallest and nearest of the out-stations. The total number of stations, all subordinate to the central government at Kaiserswerth, all animated by the same spirit, is now seventy-four.* If we combine these into one view, and remember further the great variety of work which goes on at the central institution, accumulating there a store of experience, we see at a glance how

* Since this was written the number of stations has risen to eighty-three; and the total number of confirmed Deaconesses is said to be 220, of Probationers, 120, all belonging to Kaiserswerth.

great a provision is made for a widely-extended and penetrating Christian influence.

We might, at first sight, be inclined to doubt the wisdom of associating so many different operations with the Mother-House. It might be supposed that they would hinder and disturb one another. But they have grown up gradually rather from the suggestion of circumstances than from any preconceived plan; and they are found in practice to be sources of mutual strength. Thus, the orphan-school is a soil from which Deaconesses may be expected to spring; and this expectation is often realised. If the destination of the trained Deaconess is a hospital, she is none the worse for knowing something of children; if it is an infant school, she is none the worse for knowing something of medicine. Each individual goes forth to her duties with a considerable variety of experience. But what is still more important, these opportunities of diversified training enable the directors of the establishment to turn the energies of the Sisters into channels for which their dispositions are most suitable. One may have the vivacity which gives and receives continual happiness in the midst of young children, and yet may be wanting in the sustained patience which is requisite in watching the sick bed. One may have the tact which enables her to exercise influence over the diseased in mind, and yet may have

no strength to support the heavy labour of other employments. Meantime the same religious spirit runs through all this variety; the same discipline gives coherence to the whole. There is much machinery, but one moving power; one fountain, but many streams. This unity in variety results in a ramified diffusion of good, with strength to spread into all parts of social life in European countries, and powerfully to aid the work of missionaries in the East. And yet this is not the whole of the case. Not only is the Kaiserswerth tree strong and growing, and many-branching; but the Deaconess work of the Continent is rather like the great Indian tree, the branches of which take root again, and form new trees and new shelter. Besides what we have been describing there are twenty other independent Deaconess-Institutions.* To some of these we must now turn our attention.

Following the Rhine southwards from the Prussian Provinces to the eastern frontier of France, we find, on the other side of the river, at

* The Jubilee Report states that there are now twenty-seven Mother-Houses, with a total of 1200 Sisters, "who "are carrying on their work from the Monongahela and "Alleghany rivers in North America to the banks of the "Nile, and from the still waters of Siloah to the Maeler "Lake in Sweden," p. 13.

STRASBURG, a second Deaconess-Institution, less familiarly known in England than that of Kaiserswerth, but not much more recent in its establishment, and hardly less important in its growth. Alsace, in defiance of the principle of "nationali-"ties," of which we have lately heard so much, is politically French; but many of the most important characteristics of its people are still thoroughly German. A Strasburg newspaper presents the curious feature of parallel columns in the two languages, each an exact translation of the other. As regards the Deaconesses, they generally speak German with greater facility than French. German is the language of their prayers. Their rules are printed in German. The annual reports are published in both languages. From these sources, and still more from what we have seen and heard, we proceed to give a short account of this important establishment, pointing out especially the characteristic features in which it differs from that at Kaiserswerth.

Here has taken place the same gradual growth from a small beginning. One expression used by Pastor Härter, the founder, was that "the work "always went faster than he did." But we have to notice, in the first place, that his work was not by any means a mere imitation of that of Pastor Fliedner, but independent in its origin, though parallel and full of sympathy with his in its

progress.* It was actually begun in 1842; but as early as 1817 the idea was germinating in M. Härter's mind. At that time he was a theological student. Protestant women were sought who would devote themselves to the nursing of the sick in a local hospital. His tutor told him, with tears, that they could not be found. The shame of the young theologian was great. "Surely," he said, "the Gospel has not lost its power." He has now lived, to use again his own expression, "to see that it was not that the Gospel had lost its "power, but that the French Protestants had lost "the Gospel."

Many years, however, of hard labour have intervened between that time and the present. In one respect Härter seems to have begun with an advantage which Fliedner did not possess. Long and diligent parochial work in a large flock at Strasburg, had brought around the good Pastor a number of young women, prepared by himself for confirmation, and accustomed to the systematic visiting of the poor. Thus, while he was reflecting on the Deaconesses of the Primitive Church (for this thought too was throughout present to his

* His wish was to advance in the enterprise "as the "Lord might lead," without any slavish imitation of others. Two of those who first worked under him were sent for a few weeks to Kaiserswerth: one of these is now married; the other is head of a Girls' Reformatory School.

mind, as to Fliedner's), and feeling the pressure of modern wants, some of those who had been under his teaching and training were brought gradually and simultaneously to an earnest desire to devote themselves entirely to works of charity and usefulness. He began with three, and among them the admirable lady who now presides over all the branches of the Strasburg Deaconess-Institution.

We found this institution far more highly organized and more widely extended than we were at all prepared to expect. We could perceive in it no inferiority to what we had seen at Kaiserswerth. One superiority, if so it may be called, it is very important to notice in an account intended for English readers. The Deaconesses belonged, on the whole, to a higher rank of life. At Kaiserswerth the preponderating number are from the social grade from which domestic servants are obtained; here the majority are drawn from what may be called "la bonne bourgeoisie," and one is "noble." The total number of the Sisters is now eighty, of whom thirty-five are in Strasburg itself. Of the others five are in Colmar and a very much larger number at Mülhausen.* The estab-

* While the sheets were under revision for the press, we had the pleasure of receiving the Strasburg Reports for 1860 and 1861. In the former of these years the Deaconesses in the home-stations and the out-stations were 35 and 48 respectively, in the latter, 39 and 53.

lishments in which the Deaconesses are occupied at Strasburg are, a hospital, a penitentiary, a *crèche*, a home for aged women, a school for servant girls, and a reformatory for women who have been in prison. Over every one of these, as well as at each of the out-stations, is a Sister who conducts the executive (*Sœur Conductrice*, or *Leitende-Schwester*), while the whole is under the general superintendence of the lady whom we have mentioned (*Sœur Directrice*, or *Ober-Schwester*.)

If Härter has had great advantages in the efficient preparation of his first agents, and in the high social grade of the general body, in other respects he was not so well placed as his fellow-labourer at Kaiserswerth. It is true that the Strasburg Deaconess-Institution has since 1852 obtained recognition from the French Government as an authorized charitable organization,* and that it can communicate with the Civil power officially through the Consistory. But still his position has been very different from those of Pastors Fliedner and Disselhoff, who are by authority appointed chaplains of the great Deaconess-Institution of Rhenish Prussia. He has been throughout in the midst of laborious parochial employments, and his leisure for other work has been comparatively

* "Un établissement d'utilité publique," Art. 21 of the Statutes.

small. From this circumstance, in some degree, have resulted two details of the Strasburg organization which are different from the arrangements at Kaiserswerth. The Committee is a more prominent feature of the system; and the lady at the head of the Deaconesses, not the chaplain, has the command of the executive. As to the former point, it is only natural that, in the midst of a considerable and somewhat affluent Protestant population, ladies should be found on the spot ready to give active sympathy and help to so good a work. It is possible, too, that such assistance, as it is more easily found here, may also be more willingly sought, than it would be at Kaiserswerth. As regards the other point, the placing of the executive power in female hands, certainly Fliedner's theory tends rather towards the stronger sex.* For ourselves we must confess a predilection for the arrangements which, whether from deliberate choice, or from local circumstances, M. Härter has adopted at Strasburg. In a woman, carefully chosen for fitness of character, and well trained for

* We have heard him say, in reference to the Deaconess-Institutions of East Prussia, where the arrangement is the same as at Strasburg, that he regards it as more in harmony with Scripture to place government in the hands of a man. This reminds us of some of Mrs. Jameson's statements of her great principle. But we must not forget that the home-administration in a family rests with the mother rather than the father.

so great a responsibility, we should place quite as much confidence as in any man. It appears to us also, that there is a better guarantee for permanence in a principle of government connected with the body of Deaconesses themselves, and with a local Committee, than in the commanding influence of a chaplain, whose life is necessarily uncertain and short.*

While noticing important varieties of detail, we must be careful to add, that, in the prevailing spirit and moral tone of the institutions at Strasburg, we could perceive no difference from those at Kaiserswerth. There is the same decided Protestantism, the same deep religious feeling, the same strict discipline and loyal sentiment of

* A line, however, must be drawn between the external business connected with the founding and sustaining of an Institution, and the current details of its internal management. This line was clearly drawn at the Kaiserswerth Conference: and the importance of the co-operation of men in regard to the former was strongly insisted on, whatever difference of opinion there might be in reference to the latter. A sentence from a woman's pen in this country may be quoted here. In an article in the *North British Review* (referred to elsewhere) we find the following:—"Women must pay men the compliment of saying that "they *originate* and *organize* better than we do. They are "also freer agents than we are. How many women are "now waiting with empty hands and longing hearts! will "not good men lend us their aid *to bring us and our work* "*together*?" p. 69.

close association. We have already said enough to show the doctrinal orthodoxy of M. Härter; and it would be easy to add more proof, if it were needed. But he is no more the slave of narrow prejudices than Dr. Fliedner. Believing that "circumcision is nothing," he also believes the other side of the Apostle's maxim, that "uncircumcision is nothing." His principle has been to learn from experience, and not to be precipitate in enacting regulations. For three years the work advanced without any rules at all. In the third year the statutes were roughly sketched: they were not consolidated till the seventh year; and now, within the last four months, they have been revised again. In their present form (and we have not seen them in their earlier form) they appear to us admirably sensible and explicit. The time for which service is promised * is not quite so long as at Kaiserswerth. The ordination here, as there, is in the chapel, and with the laying on of hands, with this difference that the two eldest Sisters take part in this act.† Here again is an illustration of that predominance of

* On the other hand, the probationary period is longer. Something will be said below on the (conditional) promise of a definite time of service.

† At the Kaiserswerth Conference the question was asked whether there is any precedent for this in Scripture, or the Early Church; and it was admitted that no precedent could be found, pp. 66, 67.

the female element, which we have noticed above as characteristic of Strasburg. So again, though the Sunday services are performed by M. Härter or his son,* the daily devotions are conducted by one of the Sisters. The customary dress is black, in summer dark grey. The cap is perhaps a little more nun-like than that which we noticed as worn at the sister-institution; but in this country we know so little now of those charming varieties of costume, which are still seen in many parts of the Continent, that though we must judge for ourselves at home, we have no right to criticise what is found to be convenient and pleasing abroad. Certainly there is nothing in the gown and cap of the Strasburg Deaconesses, at all more remarkable than what is seen daily in a hundred French and German villages.

It will have been noticed that at Strasburg, as at Kaiserswerth, various operations are grouped round the Mother-House; and doubtless the same advantages result. There is, however, one difference, which it is the more important to observe, as it is the result of experience. At Kaiserswerth there are two classes of sisters, nursing-sisters and teaching-sisters. So it was at first at Strasburg. But it has gradually proved expedient to allow the second branch of work to

* His son is *aumônier* — a circumstance which is an additional guarantee for the permanence of the Institution.

fall into desuetude. It was found that the health of the Deaconesses who were engaged in schools, seriously suffered; it was observed too that those who were placed in detached posts of this kind were apt to lose that staid and thoughtful character — that *Diakonissin-Sinn*, that *Cœur de Diaconesse* — on which here and elsewhere we noticed that the utmost stress was laid; and besides this, those who were educated for teachers were fettered by onerous conditions imposed by the rules of the civil government. Thus, in one respect, the work at Strasburg is more restricted than at Kaiserswerth. But, on the other hand, it may be said in some particulars to be more extended. In this point of view we must specify the school for domestic servants. We visited it in an afternoon-hour, when the girls, who are between the ages of twelve and eighteen, were engaged in sewing. In the midst was a lady of the Committee, sitting side by side with the Deaconess. This scene appeared to us a good refutation of the fallacious objection to institutions of this kind, that they tend to substitute a mechanical for a voluntary charity, and tempt the higher classes to exercise their benevolence vicariously. There can be no doubt that the deaconess-establishments of Eastern France, as they have arisen from a fruitful soil well-prepared, so have again fertilised that soil, and stimulated a

large amount of voluntary charity, which otherwise would have lain dormant; and not stimulated only, but concentrated and directed it; for charity often runs to waste, unless it is systematically guided. This is more particularly illustrated in another branch of the deaconess-work of Eastern France, to which we must now turn our attention. We mean the system of Parochial Deaconesses.

We have said nothing as yet of the parochial female diaconate, which, as it is the most primitive form of the organization we are considering, so is probably that which is most urgently needed, and most likely to find acceptance, in England. It was indeed prominently before our attention at Kaiserswerth. From thence also a large number of deaconesses are sent out to work in parishes, sometimes by the desire of the parochial ministers, sometimes at the invitation of benevolent societies. But in all cases we should remark that they are directed to work in subordination to the parochial clergy, and to make reports to them as well as to the authorities at Kaiserswerth. We should also observe that they are always sent, if possible, at least two together, and that it is generally arranged that one should have her employment in some hospital or almshouse, and thus provide a home for her sister-labourer, who is occupied in the parish. means the distraction

of "coffee-parties," and the social intercourse which might lead to gossip and loss of time, are avoided, and the gravity suitable to serious official work is more easily retained.* In a recent number of the *Armen-und Kranken-Feund* is a very full account of the theory of this parochial diaconate, illustrated by cases drawn from actual experience, and showing its utility in various points of view, in the assistance given to the clergyman in seeking out cases of temporal and spiritual distress, in detecting imposture, in attending the sick in their own houses, in teaching poor women how to nurse invalids and how to cook, in promoting the regular attendance of children at school, in co-operating with charitable associations, in superintending sewing-schools and mending-schools, in exercising a good influence over grown-up girls in service and in factories, especially as regards the great danger of Sunday amusements, and in meeting the Roman Catholic Sisters of Charity on their own ground, that is, in families which have the elements of discord made ready by means of a mixed marriage.† It is, however, in connection with the Strasburg-

* All this we gathered from conversation in the summer of 1860. These practical principles and the experience connected with them are recorded in the minutes of the Conference held in the autumn of 1861, p. 74.

† *A. und K. F.* for May and June 1860, pp. 71—87.

Institution that we have actually seen the parochial Deaconess in the midst of her work, — not indeed at Strasburg itself, but at Mülhausen, a busy town well known to many of our readers as a large uninteresting place, full of manufactures, by which they have passed, when beginning to be weary of the long railway-journey from Paris to Basle.

In this place are twelve Strasburg Deaconesses — seven working in the large hospital, and five in the parochial subdivisions of the town.* Mülhausen is, no doubt, the only town in France where a public hospital is conducted by Protestant Sisters. As regards numbers, among the lower orders here the Roman Catholic population is largely increasing. But the wealth and influence are with the Protestants. Thus the traveller finds

* These numbers were understated even for 1860. Without seeking to correct the statistics for that year, we will give the substance of what is said with joyful thankfulness at the beginning of the Report for 1861. "Nine years ago, "as a small beginning, there was a single district-deaconess "for the sick of a single street; now the town, through its "whole extent, is subdivided into six quarters, which are "cared for by nursing-sisters; and the district-nursing has "its own house, large and roomy, as a central point for "this work of Christian love. Seventeen years ago there "was not a single Deaconess in Mülhausen; now twenty-"four are labouring here (fifteen in the hospital, and nine in "the new house), all that they may serve the Lord in His "suffering members."—*Diakonissenwerk in Mülhausen*, p. 3.

the Deaconess with her Bible, established in a safe and busy home in the midst of the patients for whom her life is spent. All round is the garden, which seems a constant feature of all Deaconess-hospitals. Within is the *pharmacie*, well provided with all medical appliances, and here some of the Sisters are constantly to be seen, making up medicines or preparing bandages. As regards the medical aspect of a Deaconess-Institution, certainly Strasburg will well bear comparison with Kaiserswerth. But it is the other, the parochial group of Deaconesses at Mülhausen, concerning which we desire especially to say a word. A new building is in preparation for their home,* but at present they live together in a house contiguous to the residence of one of the pastors of the town. There they have prayers morning and evening. At noon they meet for dinner and a short rest. All the remainder of the day they are out at work in their several quarters. The town is divided into five districts, and in each one of these the Deaconess of the district has a couple of rooms, which are the centre of her operations. She has here a small collection of medicines, with linen and flannel, and whatever else is likely to be needed by the sick and suffering poor. Here too is a kitchen,

* For the grateful commemoration of the completion of this new house see the preceding note.

where her servant prepares soup and meat for the aged and the convalescent. Here, at fixed intervals, the Deaconess meets the physician to receive instructions regarding those invalids who are able to come for advice. The more serious cases are visited at home. All the ordinary cases she is competent, from her medical training, to deal with herself. With the general wants of the poor and degraded in her district she is busied throughout the day. Sometimes she passes the night by the bed of those who are dangerously ill. It is evident that this system inspires the utmost confidence at Mülhausen. The Roman Catholic Sisters of Charity are adopting some plans of the same kind; but we were told that the poor prefer the Deaconesses, because of their high opinion of their training and experience. There is evidently no lack of funds. The municipality allows to each Deaconess the services of the *Médecin du Quartier*, and the *Bureau de Bienfaisance* supplies the medicines. What is perhaps more important still, there are local committees, and a general superintending committee, of those who voluntarily give their time and contributions in aid of this well-organized work. Ladies come forward willingly to cooperate in this way, and the accounts are published quarterly. Above all, these exertions have throughout a distinctly religious aim. The end is to do

good to the soul while caring for the body. While we heard and saw the details of this excellent system, it seemed like the realization of a long-cherished dream of a female parochial diaconate.

Following still the "natural frontier," we pass from the German part of France to the German part of Switzerland. The neighbourhood of Basle has for some time been celebrated for its benevolent and religious institutions. None of them have been more rapidly and surely successful than the Deaconess-House at a village not far distant from the city. The foolish and fratricidal quarrel, which a few years ago resulted in the separation of "Basle city" and "Basle country," left attached to the former the small slip of country belonging to the old canton, which lay on the right bank of the Rhine. This northerly fragment of Switzerland is a well-wooded eminence, having the picturesque little church of St. Crischona on its summit, which is conspicuous from all the neighbourhood of Basle, and itself commands a glorious view of the Rhine valley immediately beneath, and the distant mountains of the Oberland beyond. We counsel the philanthropic traveller to leave the luxury of the "Three Kings" very early in the morning, to go by the Baden railway as far as the first station, then to follow the steep footpaths through dewy vines and corn,

so as to join the students of the homely missionary college of St. Crischona at their seven o'clock breakfast. Thence he may drop down into the opposite valley, where the Wiese flows from the Black Forest to join the Rhine; and at the small village of RIEHEN he will find the homely, but most useful and prosperous, Deaconess-Institution, with its hospital enclosed in a cheerful garden.

What we have already said is an approximate expression of the characteristic differences of this institution as compared with those which we have previously described. The scale of the establishment is much smaller. The Deaconesses are less highly educated, and, like the students of St. Crischona, come chiefly from the labouring classes. Their work, with the exception of an infant school, is almost entirely restricted to the care of the sick. Again, the organization is of a simpler kind. The rules are less severe; the whole system less exacting. There is no fixed period for which a conditional promise of service is given. It is presumed that those who present themselves for the work do so from deliberate and serious choice. This is regarded as a sufficient guarantee.*

* As to the promised period of service, it should be remembered that in all Deaconess-Institutions there is perfect liberty to reti[illegible] any time, if new circumstances should urgently r[illegible] [illegible]cially in the case of any claim

Great power here, as at Strasburg, is given to the lady at the head, the daughter of a Basle manufacturer, a gentle and truly feminine woman, but with much strength of character and great administrative talent. The same spirit of freedom is perceptible at Richen, in its religious relations. As regards theological belief and practical devotion, it does not differ from Kaiserswerth or Strasburg. But here is no official connection with any ecclesiastical authority — no chapel — no subordination to a chaplain. Religious instruction and spiritual care are voluntarily afforded to the inmates by neighbouring clergymen or by theological professors.* In the arrangements which we have here slightly sketched we have possibly a lower ideal than that which we have surveyed at the two greater institutions; but perhaps these arrangements are better adapted

arising from family duties. Where there is a conditional promise of service for a specified period (as, for instance, at Kaiserswerth, for five years, with the option of renewing it at the expiration of that time)—this is required as a guarantee to the Institution which has done so much for the Deaconesses in their time of probation, and as a protection to themselves against their own feelings of discouragement or caprice, and against the arguments of those who seek to unsettle their minds.

* The publicly-expressed sympathy of the theological professors in the University of Basle is to be noted as one of the favourable religious influences of the neighbourhood.

to the free and independent atmosphere of Switzerland. Prussia is strongly monarchical. We know what France is. Possibly even in England there are some who would look with more favour on the free regulations of Riehen than on the more strictly ecclesiastical constitution of Kaiserswerth and Strasburg.

This very freedom gives more appropriateness to a quotation which we introduce here for the purpose of conveying to our readers some notion of the solemnity with which a German Deaconess, when the period of her probation is closed, is set apart for her chosen work. The Riehen Reports give the services actually used at successive consecrations. We select the following from that which is most recent: * —

> "In the name of our faithful Lord and Master, in "the name of the Triune God, who till this day has "so unmistakeably accompanied our work with His "blessing,—will ye, in the presence of this holy work, "wherein ye have had experience now for two years, "promise † OBEDIENCE, WILLINGNESS, and FAITHFUL-"NESS?—*obedience* towards those who are set over

* Report for 1859, pp. 18, 19.

† In the similar (though not identical) service for 1857 it is expressly said that "this promise is no monastic vow, "no rule imposed by an order, but that it expresses the "spirit of free Evangelical love which animates the house "and servic[illegible] Deaconesses, while yet this spirit by "no mea[illegible]d and orderly regulations."

" you, especially as regards your superintending Sister, " and all the regulations of the house; *willingness*, in " accomplishing the service that may be committed to " you, in being sent out or summoned back, when and " how the authorities may judge best; *faithfulness* in " all the occupations assigned to you, and above all " towards Him who hath called you?

" If ye are ready to fulfil this promise with a cheer- " ful heart, looking unto Him who will make His " strength manifest in your weakness, then answer me " here now, in the presence of these assembled sym- " pathizing witnesses, with a '*yea*,' and reach to me " here each one of you the hand in token of your " promise.

" The merciful and ever-present One, in whose name " we are assembled, hath heard you promise. May He " give you stedfastness!

" In pursuance of the pledge which ye have given, " I here pronounce you Deaconesses, received into the " sisterhood of our house, and invite you, kneeling " down in the Lord's name, to receive a blessing by " my hand as of an ordained minister of the Evangelical " Church.

" Sisters SUSETTE SCHMID and ANETTE HAUSER — " *The God of peace sanctify you wholly, and your whole* " *spirit, and soul, and body, be preserved blameless unto* " *the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ* (1 Thess. v. 23). " Sisters SUSANNA SPÜHLER and ANNA HOFFMAN — " *Our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our* " *Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us ever-* " *lasting consolation and good hope through faith, com-* " *fort your hearts, and establish you in every good word* " *and work* (2 Thess. ii. 16, 17). Sisters VERENA " MÖHL and LOUISE HÖSSLI — *The peace of God,* " *which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and*

"*minds in Christ Jesus* (Phil. iv. 7). Sisters ADELHEID "HAGEN and ANNA HITZ—*The Lord our God be* "*favourable unto you, and prosper the work of your* "*hands upon you, yea, prosper He your handy-work*" (Ps. xc. 17).*

Though the work which we have described is comparatively small, it is thoroughly prosperous, and has great capacity for growth. The buildings connected with the Mother-House have recently been increased. Besides the nursing of the poor in their own dwellings at various places, hospitals at Berne, Zurich, and Schaffhausen, are served by Deaconesses from Riehen. Further operations of the parochial kind are spoken of as in progress or in prospect.† But we must not linger too long

* The texts so given are regarded as mottoes and watch-words for the future and memorials of the consecration. As to the three words "*Obedience, Willingness,* and *Faithful-*"*ness,*" they might be called the Strasburg formula. The phrase seems borrowed at Riehen from the regulations drawn up by M. Härter.

† Report for 1859, p. 6. In the recently-received Report for 1861, allusion is made (pp. 9, 10) to progress in the city of Basle, both in Hospital-work and Parish-work. The comparison between the two years stands thus. In 1859, six Probationers were received and eight Deaconesses consecrated; in 1861, the corresponding numbers were thirteen and six. The latter Report contains a friendly allusion to the Kaiserswerth Conference, the tables of which now assign to Riehen nineteen Probationers and thirty-two Deaconesses. It appears that an independent "Mother-"House" is now established in Berne.

on one point. In passing, however, to a new part of Switzerland, we cannot refrain from marking by the way another aspect of the Deaconess-work, in which we think it ought to be seriously and hopefully considered.

Three accidental circumstances associated with our visit to this place lead us to notice a remote benefit resulting from Deaconess-Institutions, which we believe will come prominently into view before many years are past. Among the recent residents at Riehen is the famous African missionary Krapf, who has thus been able to reinforce the Deaconess-Institution from the stores of his cheerful spirit and long-tried experience. Among the religious Institutions of Basle are two missionary colleges.* Among the favourite projects of the benevolent M. Spittler (himself the chief founder both of the Deaconess-House and of these colleges) is the connection of the Mediterranean by an "apostolic highway" of twelve stations with Abyssinia, the scene of the labours of Krapf and his companions. What would be the effect of establishing Deaconesses at such stations? At Kaiserswerth we heard of the valuable services of these trained Christian women in Mahomedan communities, as at Jerusalem and

* One of these is that of St. Crischona mentioned above, the other is an institution of higher pretensions.

Smyrna.* Through the children whom they teach, and through gratitude for help given in the healing of the sick, they are welcome in the harems. We have here a close parallel to the position of the Deaconess of the Primitive Church. What if the restoration of this office is destined to be one of the instruments of converting the Mahomedan East? †

* The school conducted by the Kaiserswerth Deaconesses at Smyrna is described with much approbation by Mr. Senior in his *Journal kept in Turkey and Greece*, pp. 215—218. "They have a large house in the Armenian quarter, "which they purchased and enlarged and furnished with "$30,000, of which 20,000 were advanced by the King "of Prussia." And the remark is quoted from M. Van Lennap, a Prussian: "I do not suppose so much good "was ever done with £3,000 as was done by our good "king, when his 20,000 thalers enabled the Deaconesses to "found their school." The girls in this school, partly boarders and partly day scholars, are chiefly children of European residents, Armenians, Roman Catholics, and Greeks; and we do not know how far a direct impression has yet been made on the Mahomedan population.

Another work in the East, to be conducted by the same agency, is now projected: viz., among the orphans left by the late massacres in Syria. Concerning this the eminent geographer, the Chev. Van de Velde, who is gone on a preliminary mission of inquiry, says in a letter—"The object "of the Society is principally to work by means of Asylums, "and Pastor Fliedner's Deaconesses will of course be the "great instruments."

† Nor ought the *Hindoo* East to be forgotten. We heard it lately said on good authority that the great hope for

What Riehen is to the German part of Switzerland, SAINT-LOUP is to the French. The latter Deaconess-Institution is in a position still more rural, still more remote from any town, and certainly not less beautiful than the former. There is not even a hamlet at Saint-Loup. The little hospital stands on a cheerful and healthy eminence, about three miles from the small station of Eclépens, on the Lausanne and Yverdon railway. Here we are at the frontier of the long range of the Jura, and among the low precipices of blue calcareous rock, which remind us of the mountain-limestone of the north-western districts of England, except that in the Pays de Vaud the walnut-trees and the cherry-trees present a leafage and fruitage to which we are not accustomed at home. Here Pastor Germond devotes a life, which has long been a laborious and happy one, to the affectionate care of invalids of the poorer classes, and of the Deaconesses who are under training for work here and elsewhere. He is practically the Director, the Committee, and the Chaplain. It would be more correct to say that he is the Father of the whole establishment;

families in India is in the influence of the European women over the native women. If the "middle wall of partition" between East and West is to be thus broken down, it will be quite in harmony with what happened in the earliest ages of the Church.

and it would be still more correct to say that M. and Madame Germond are the father and mother of a large family, where the invalids, the Deaconesses, and the servants, are reckoned among the children. Here we have before us a type of the female Diaconate slightly different from that at Riehen. The plan is more domestic; the rules are even less stringent; the ecclesiastical arrangements are even more free, though a minister of religion is the heart and centre of the establishment. At Saint-Loup there is no laying on of hands; but the Deaconesses are simply commended to God by solemn prayer when their time of probation has been satisfactorily closed. There is no chapel; but once on a Sunday the inmates go to the church of la Sarraz, which is about a mile distant; and once there is service in the large dining-room. The Pays de Vaud was, some fifteen years ago, like Scotland, the scene of a serious disruption. M. Germond belongs to the Free Church; but the circumstance does not seem to cause any hindrance to his work; the asperities of a time of controversy are considerably softened; and he says that he finds almost more sympathy and support in the "National" Church than the "Free."

It is instructive to notice the motives which led this good man to begin his undertaking, and the steps by which it has [illegible] not without

opposition, to its present condition of success. At Neuchâtel a hospital had been founded by a benevolent Swiss gentleman named Pourtalès; and M. Germond heard with shame that it was served by "Les Sœurs grises." What! he asked, is "la reconnaissance pour le salut gratuit" a weaker principle than the hope of earning reward by good works? He frequently spoke about the subject as a man does when he is possessed by an idea which will not let him rest, when it happened, at a meeting of the "Société Evangélique" at Lausanne, in 1841, that M. de Gasparin, who had just paid a visit to Kaiserswerth, spoke in glowing words of what he had seen and admired there. This address was the spark which kindled the fuel already laid. A small conference, held at the country residence of a wealthy and benevolent gentleman of the Pays de Vaud, resulted in a determination to found a Deaconess-Institution for the Canton, and in the immediate collection of sufficient funds; the care of organization and government being consigned to M. Germond, who was then pastor at Echallens.

There the establishment was placed in the early years of its history. Its success was rapid and sure, though the first difficulties were not inconsiderable. Opposition came from an unexpected quarter; and presently this was followed by assistance equally unexpected. Madame de Gas-

parin took alarm at what she supposed to be the introduction of monastic institutions and Popish principles into the heart of the Protestant Church, and she expressed her conviction in the lively style and with the warm religious zeal which characterize all her writings.* Meanwhile M. Germond and his wife were experiencing much embarrassment from the inconvenience of their position at Echallens, especially from the fact that their own residence was separated from that of the Deaconesses. Just then M. Butini, an uncle of Madame de Gasparin, warmly sympathizing with M. Germond, more than compensated for the vigour of his niece's attack by purchasing for the work, and presenting the house, in the situation which we have described, and which has the additional charm, in clear weather, of commanding a view of the snowy Alps from the Jungfrau to Mont Blanc. The house itself was originally built for invalids near some baths which enjoyed a temporary reputation. No circumstances could be more favourable to the consolidation of a Deaconess-Institution in its simplest and most

* Her first attack was contained in eight letters addressed to the editor of *L'Avenir*, a small Swiss periodical, in 1849 and 1850. These letters were reprinted in 1855 at the end of two considerable volumes, published in Paris, and entitled *Des Corporations Monastiques au sein du Protestantisme.*

domestic form. M. Germond has, since the change of locality, been entirely devoted to the work; funds have come unsought; the Sisters have risen in number since 1842 from four to thirty-five;* the poor sufferers from all quarters, who are intrusted to their care, receive not only watchful and skilful nursing, but that spiritual help for which their sickness is regarded as the most precious opportunity. A hundred suppositions, which were made at first, have been refuted by experience; vague fears have subsided; the Sisters have not "waked up," on any morning, "to find themselves Papists;" and the Institution, though having no formal connection with the State or the Church, may be truly said to be naturalized in the Canton by the acceptance of public opinion.

We welcome the sharp controversy which has animated the progress of this Institution, as having a tendency to promote clear views and distinct statements; to separate principles from details, and to record suggestions which may be very useful in England. On some of these points we shall have more to say when we come to Paris,† where controversy concerning Deaconesses has appeared in a more serious form. A word may be said here, in passing, on the two topics of *payment* and *dress*, which are not without their impor-

* There are now 37. † See Appendix III.

tance, and which came before our notice conversationally at Saint-Loup.

The principle of "non-remuneration" has been attacked with some severity by Madame de Gasparin. It is possible that her arguments on the subject might meet with some sympathy in England, though we must confess that, when discussing the subject of Deaconesses, we have usually been met by the opposite argument, viz. that a systematic organization of this kind would interfere with the unbought labour of voluntary lady-visitors. To this point we shall return.* A few words will be sufficient for the other objection.

It is sententiously urged that "the labourer is "worthy of her hire." A Scripture proverb may be so repeated, where it is inapplicable, as to degenerate into a trusim. What is the fact as regards the Deaconesses of Saint-Loup, and all the other Institutions which we are describing? They give their time, their strength, their best devotion, to the cause which they have deliberately chosen; and in return they receive from the Institution food and raiment, training and experience, religious counsel and sympathy, and a sure home in time of sickness or decrepitude; and, moreover, they obtain from those for whom they labour a degree of confidence and affection which would

* See below, p. 168, also pp. 205, 206.

probably never be given to those who are paid in the form of wages for work done. These women doubtless feel that they have, even in this world, an abundant reward. The payment is indirect, but it is real. It cannot be denied that on the Continent great stress is laid on this indirect payment, as opposed to the direct. M. Germond said to us, that the female Diaconate, if it is paid in wages, becomes simply an "*industrie*" or trade; he insisted that the respect paid to service of this kind is far greater if the service is not remunerated in the ordinary sense; and he illustrated his position by the case of a Deaconess employed in a school for young children, where her care was felt to be truly *maternal* because it was truly *disinterested*. We commend these views and this experience to those of our English readers who are seriously intending to improve the organization of women's work in our own country.

At the same time we honestly acknowledge that it is possible to be one-sided here, and to be far too narrow and exclusive. There is a profound conviction in this country, as Mrs. Jameson remarks, that everything, even the exercise of charity, has a money-value, and that work undertaken from love must be performed in a slovenly unbusiness-like manner.* We do not stay to dis-

* P. 136.

cuss how far it is desirable to yield to or to combat such a creed. But this is certain, that the highest Christian devotion may be found in those who receive wages for their spiritual work. The Clergy themselves are paid agents. There can, we think, be no objection to the employment of women on this principle. But it is a higher form both of labour and reward, if all that the labourer wishes is to have facilities to serve God freely, and if, having "food and raiment," she is "therewith "content." It is important also to add, that on this principle we are far less likely to meet with unworthy candidates, who seek only for a maintenance, and that the sagacious public are far less likely to say that our female Diaconate is, after all, a mercenary proceeding and a failure.

The question of dress may be spoken of as a merely trivial detail; though, in those who say so, there is sometimes this curious inconsistency —that they will summarily condemn a Christian and useful enterprise because of something peculiar in this mere triviality. But this question is by no means unimportant. A religious work may be marred by want of good sense and by disregard of the feelings and prejudices of others in the mere matter of costume, and this in two ways. There can hardly be a greater jar to the senses than when a lady in bright colours and sumptuous attire comes to make visits among the squalid

poor or passes from bed to bed in a hospital. The case is still worse, when, in those who minister to the suffering, there is that tawdry imitation of finery which does not so much suggest the separation of ranks as remind us of a character morally disreputable. Mrs. Jameson notices, with her usual force, this kind of anomaly, which in hospitals and workhouses is by no means infrequent.* We may give two illustrations of our meaning from our own recent experience. A new matron was appointed to a penitentiary: she appeared without a cap; the effect on the committee was something like consternation, nor was it without some politic management that the embarrassing question of the head-dress was adjusted. On another occasion, we remember a lady, both young and handsome, taking charge in the matron's absence of a benevolent institution, and instantly transforming herself, by the mere addition of a well-chosen cap, into visible fitness for the post which she was filling. Her moral fitness did not in any way depend upon her costume; but to the comfort, contentment, and confidence of the pauper-inmates it was a matter of very considerable moment. This is one side of the question of suiting dress to the feelings of others; but there is another side of at least equal importance. We know how much panic there is in this

* Pp. 143, 144.

country (foolish panic, very possibly) about the outward symbols of Romanism. No words can be too strong for condemning the use of such a dress as provokes constant criticism, as mars and hinders a good work by exciting prejudice, as either is or is supposed to be a palpable imitation of that which is an object of abhorrence.*

Thus far we have been speaking of suitability of dress. A further question relates to uniformity of dress. A multitude of questions are often answered and much time and trouble saved by uniformity. In many cases, indeed — as, for instance, among the Bible-Women — there is no reason why it should be adopted; though even among the Bible-Women there has been occasional trouble with regard to flowers and flounces. At Saint-Loup, we heard M. Germond good-humouredly say (and never did any man appear to us less inclined to a sarcastic criticism) that if the Deaconesses were free to choose their dress, they would spend a large portion of their time in discussing the colour and the pattern of it. He added, that the recognised costume gave confidence to the invalids. When they saw the brown dress of Saint-Loup, they expected to be properly nursed.† Nor ought we to forget how much

* See below, pp. 120 and 153 n.

† The effect of costume on the minds of invalids is not unimportant. A grave but not gloomy colour and a home-

economy is promoted in an institution by a uniform official dress, and how it tends to secure respectful treatment in travelling and in the bad parts of populous towns.* As to any supposed despotism in a rule of this kind, women can be induced to show an abject submission to the tyranny of fashion; and it is hard if they are to be precluded from following the dictates of common sense. And all these arguments acquire tenfold force when members of different social grades are brought to cooperate in one common work. Costume, as Madame Beck says in answer to Madame de Gasparin, is of no value in esta-

like appearance are soothing and tranquillising. For this reason partly, Fliedner chose the Kaiserswerth blue. In the case of attendance on the sick, a material that will wash well is evidently of importance. Uniform dresses of suitable material are worn by the nurses in St. John's House and Devonshire Square, and in the Liverpool Institution. Miss Nightingale does not say much on dress in the *Notes on Nursing*, but what she does say is very emphatic.—"Noise," pp. 66—68.

* The Kaiserswerth Conference pronounced unanimously for a distinctive dress, and summed up its advantages thus, that it made the "Sisters known at once alike to their "Charge and the Public, inspired confidence in them as "Servants of the Church and of Christian Charity; pro-"tected them from the rudeness of the mob; rendered "them less subject to vanity, and less disturbed by changes "of fashion, besides saving much expenditure." It is added, however, that the dress ought to be as simple and as little

blishing any evangelical doctrine, but it has an important bearing on practical usefulness.*

We have rather digressed from Saint-Loup and M. Germond's family of Deaconesses under the Jura. But the subject of dress must have been once mentioned somewhere, and the discussion of it happened to associate itself with this particular Institution; nor could the arguments have been presented anywhere with greater weight, because

peculiar as possible, and in harmony with the directions of St. Paul and St. Peter (1 Tim. ii. 9, 10; 1 Peter iii. 3, 4), pp. 60, 61. To this may fitly be added a practical remark made by Canon Seymour in Convocation, that "when one "Sister was unable to continue her attendance upon a sick "person, another in the same dress taking her place would "scarcely be recognized as a different person."—*Debate*, p. 12.

* *Quelques Mots, &c.*, p. 33. In reference to a kind regulation of the authorities of the Strasburg Railway, allowing a reduction of fare to the Deaconesses (a very palpable advantage, by the way, of a charitable office and a recognized garb), Madame Beck quotes a very droll remark by Madame de Gasparin,—"Phébé, qui ne portait pas l'habit, "aurait été obligée de payer place entière." This leads us into a train of thought, which it might be instructive to follow, concerning the literal circumstances of Phœbe's journey across the sea from Corinth, and along the Appian way towards Rome. Whether she met with friends, such as St. Paul found afterwards in Julius on the same route (Acts xxvii. 3, 31, 43; xxviii. 16), we cannot tell; but the expedi[illegible]st have been attended with considerable risks, and [illegible]mall responsibility.

of the free character of all the arrangements at Saint-Loup. If our unpractised eye did not deceive us, the brown * dresses of its Deaconesses were not all made of precisely the same material.† There is a Swiss freedom about this place which would make it peculiarly attractive to many of our English people; and there are two other points of view in which it is especially worthy of our notice. It is an excellent type of a small *country* hospital, and in all this discussion we must not so think of our large towns as to allow the needs of our rural districts to be forgotten.‡ Again, we find, on looking at the reports for 1858 and 1859, that a strong feeling has grown up here of the value of a hospital suitable for *children.* The duty is pointed out of paying special attention to the health of those who may have many years to spend in this world, and with regard to whom negligence might be a cruel condemnation to a

* Perhaps nothing is so hazardous in the whole subject as to give an opinion on the best dress for an English Deaconess. But we cannot help saying that the Saint-Loup costume appeared to us grave, cheerful, and pleasing. It is very similar to that which is worn by the nurses in King's College Hospital, and it resembles what was recommended in a sensible letter in a recent number of the *Guardian* (March 5, 1862). Black is worn at Riehen and Paris.

† At Kaiserswerth the gowns are all made at the Mother-House.

‡ See above, p. 28.

long period of helplessness and pain; and the desirableness of a distinct house of health for these young sufferers is strongly urged. Meanwhile it is important to notice that it is the *motherly* care of the Deaconesses at Saint-Loup which has fostered this feeling for children, and inspired the confidence which brings them there already in large numbers. Here again we have a new argument in favour of a systematic organization of the female Diaconate.

M. Germond's wish has been to confine his Institution within limits to which the family-principle can be applied, and he would prefer the establishment of new centres of operation to a wide-spread ramification from the tree which he has planted. The tree, however, is widely spread, and is bearing fruit in remote places.* His direct superintendence has been extended to various outstations, where his Deaconesses have been planted in small institutions for orphans, for crétins, for convalescents. Four are engaged in hospitals in the Vaudois valleys of Piedmont; two are conducting a school at Ferney, within the French frontier; two are at the Protestant Hospital at Genoa, and it ought not to be forgotten that

* Among these it would be fair to mention an institution at Lausanne for the theoretical training of nurses, sprung, in some degree, from the opposition to which we have adverted, but welcomed by M. Germond as a friendly a-

English sailors have there found the blessing of the care and skill of these Swiss nurses.*

Our own attention has been particularly turned to a modest but most useful branch-institution for the benefit of domestic servants in Geneva. There we found a Saint-Loup Deaconess who had been engaged for six years in this post. The work seems to be prospering exceedingly. New and more convenient premises have lately been taken. The number of servants who have the privileges of membership, entitling them to a home in the intervals between one place and another, with the opportunity at all times of religious influence and friendly counsel, amounts to above five hundred. The names of these *sociétaires*, with the date of their admission and the place of their service, are hung up on the walls. The superintendent, with her assistant-deaconess, being professionally devoted to these duties, all the operations are conducted with regularity and method. A large committee of ladies afford an active and kind cooperation, and various pastors give efficient help in maintaining that religious character which, in this case as in all the rest, is the end and aim of all that is done. And here, as the hospital is the great opportunity for spiritual benefit, we must particularly notice the provision for invalid servants. In 1859,

* See above, p. 19.

twenty-one were nursed at the Institution for average periods of thirty-six or thirty-seven days. Thus again we see the value both of the religious and medical training of the Deaconess, and in reference to a class of persons on whom the middle and higher ranks are singularly dependent, and to whom, with all their waywardness and caprice, they are under great and continual obligations.

It is impossible for an Englishman to be in Geneva during the present year * without thinking of PARIS. Even to the members of the Alpine Club it is probably not an agreeable thought that the snowy summit which is sometimes reflected in the lake is the highest ground in France. The appearance of the new military uniforms in the towns and villages of Savoy, the possibility of Parisian Congresses near or remote, the constant drilling of soldiers draughted successively from the various cantons,—these have been for some months the prominent topics of interest in the great frontier city. Meantime it can hardly be doubted that France holds those northern mountains of Savoy till the next European war. Nor is this the only way in which Paris is closing in upon Geneva. The Roman Catholic population has for some time been largely increasing both in number and influence. This city is

* Written [illegible]

the *mezzo termine* between the free Protestantism of the Pays de Vaud and the French metropolis, where the Protestants are a very small, yet not quite powerless, minority. The contrast in all respects is great, when we pass from the rural Deaconess-Institute at Saint-Loup to the similar Institute in the notorious Faubourg St. Antoine. We may expect in this transition to come upon some new aspects of the female Diaconate, not without some points of relation to our own parties and controversies.* The constitution of the establishment is of the less severe and less ecclesiastical type, like those of Riehen and Saint-Loup, as contrasted with those of Kaiserswerth and Strasburg. In answer to the question whether ordination by the laying on of hands was the rule, the remark was made —"*Nous ne voulons pas "faire des prêtresses, mais des Chrétiennes,*" words curiously like what we have adduced from Epiphanius and the Apostolical Constitutions. In the religious purpose, however, kept in view from the outset,— in the sense of the need of an organized female charity for our present social conditions,— in the remembrance of the female Diaconate of the Primitive Church,† this work is identical with

* Some of these are considered in detail in Appendix III.

† In the very last Report (April 1861) this side of the subject is presented in a very forcible manner. The writer quotes the testimony of M. Vivien (*Etudes Administratives,*

all the rest. Nor is it by any means a mere copy of that which was begun and accomplished by Dr. Fliedner. The idea seems to have been in M. Vermeil's mind as early as 1830; though it was not till ten years later that the enterprise was begun under Mdlle. Malvesin, the present admirable superintendent. She was then at Bordeaux. For years she had desired to devote herself entirely to some work of this kind. But the path was not clear. She wrote for counsel to M. Vermeil on

iii. 310) to the Deaconess-work, which, as he says, "sans vœux de pauvreté, d'obéissance, ni de célibat," does what the Sisters of Charity do for the comfort of the sick and the instruction of the young, and which claims in fact the Protestant precedent of the "Dames de la Rochelle," and the "Sœurs de Sédan," before the time of St. Vincent de Paul: to which it is rejoined, that the only fault to be found here is, that a far earlier precedent is claimed. "L'essai, "ou plutôt l'institution elle-même, il importe de ne pas "l'oublier, remonte aux premiers jours de l'Eglise; et il y "a lieu de s'étonner que notre ancienne discipline, si jalouse "cependant de sa conformité avec celles des premiers "chrétiens, ait complètement laissé de côté cette partie si "importante de l'œuvre apostolique. Le moment était venu "de combler cette regrettable lacune en restituant à la "femme chrétienne, dans l'Eglise et au nom de l'Eglise, la "place que le Saint-Esprit lui-même lui a assignée." P. 8. "Nous désirons chercher à persuader l'Eglise que c'est "mutiler arbitrairement sa constitution primitive que d'en "retrancher cette œuvre importante, établie dans les pre-"miers temps sous la forme d'une organisation régulière au "même titre que celles des Diacres et des Anciens," P. 10.

the same day when he wrote to invite her to Paris. Thus grew up this excellent Institution under the joint efforts of two minds: feminine tact and administration being combined with the resolute purpose and active struggles of the stronger sex. No conjunction could have more completely realized Mrs. Jameson's principle of the "com-"munion with labour."

And now we take our leave of the Continental Deaconess-Institutions. We might have extended our history much further, and have included both Holland and Sweden.* In fact, it seems likely that before long every considerable town in Reformed Christendom (are we to exclude England?), and even many a country village, will have its Deaconesses or Deaconess-Institution.

Are we to exclude England? We have given a sketch, very imperfect, but derived entirely from personal observation, of what has been done by some of the Protestants of the Continent, during the last twenty-five years, in organizing Woman's helping work for the succour of the miserable and degraded. Our observations, in passing through Switzerland and France towards

* Wichern's article in Herzog's *Encyklopädie* makes mention of a Deaconess-Institution at Utrecht, with a station at Nymwegen, and of similar establishments at Groningen, Amsterdam, and Stockholm. An institution for the Protestants of St. Petersburg, may be added since 1859.

our own shore, seem to have brought us within the atmosphere of our own storms and controversies, and face to face with our own social difficulties. The practical home-question is, in fact, that which we have had in view throughout, alike in our examination of Scripture and the Primitive Church, and of Continental Protestantism. What have we been doing here either in the primitive or the foreign way, or under other forms more adapted to our habits and condition? How much has been accomplished already? and what further efforts ought diligently to be made, under the pressure of our present needs? What can we glean from the fields which we have rapidly gone over—what practical suggestions to be turned to some account in regard to the social and religious state of England? No one can possibly say that our needs are less urgent in this country than they were in primitive times, or than they are now on the Continent. What have we done, and what are we prepared to do?

Much has undoubtedly been accomplished already. It would be a great mistake to speak despondingly or despairingly, though we may not yet have had a female Diaconate on a settled plan or under one distinctive name. If we have not a mature harvest, there has been much ploughing and breaking up of the clods, and the green blade is seen here and there in patches. If there has

been much irregularity of movement, and only a gradual progress towards organization, this may be a positive advantage. Such intervals are just the times for gaining the best experience. It is always well to have our materials ready before we begin to build. Prejudices do not subside in a day. It is reasonable to wait at least twenty years before we give decisive opinions on the results of an important social movement. Mr. Hayne says that the time for action in the matter of Deaconesses is come. We quite agree with him. But we do not think that the time for discussion is ended. Twenty years ago it might have been said in Germany that the experiment at Kaiserswerth had resulted in nothing but words; but since that time the institutions of Strasburg, Riehen, and Saint-Loup have been founded, and more than a score of others, similar in their character and success. In England a good beginning has been made. Already the large Hospital of King's College, London, is served by Church of England "Sisters," under admirable government. Another organization of the same kind, very small as yet, but full of promise, is to be seen at Middlesborough, in Yorkshire.* Nor, while

* More progress has been made since this brief statement was originally printed; and it may be convenient to exhibit in one view certain definite advances which have been realized amongst us towards a systematic female Diaconate. We

speaking of women's work in reference to health, ought we to omit the London establishment

arrange them according to dioceses, not because we are aware of any wish to this effect among those who are practically engaged in these several works, but for the sake of convenience, and because we are strongly of opinion that our arrangements in this matter should be Diocesan as well as Parochial.

(1) London.—In this diocese two institutions demand special notice,—the above-mentioned Hospital, served now entirely by the Sisters of St. John's House (Norfolk Street, Strand), which is practically a Deaconess-Institution, and a more recent institution (at 50 Burton Crescent) which has adopted that title by the Bishop's sanction. The nursing of the sick is the starting-point of the former, but its work has also ramified most usefully into local visitation in London; and now, too, a plan is in progress for the training of Country Nurses. It is proposed that the nurses should be selected from the localities where they are to serve, and that, after their training at the Hospital in London is complete, they should follow their vocation under the direction and supervision of the Clergy and Medical Men. Details can be learnt on application to the Lady-Superintendent. The other, the "North London Deaconess-Institution," aims primarily at local visitation; but it also embraces the care of the sick, and provides an education for girls of the lower middle class. It was opened on St. Andrew's day in 1861, and its progress hitherto is full of hope. The lady at the head was partially trained at Kaiserswerth. The chaplain is the Rev. T. Pelham Dale.

(2) York.—The "Cottage Hospital," established about four years ago at Middlesborough, "on the principle of "Woman's Devotion to God and the Poor," and under a lady

of "Nursing Sisters," founded by Mrs. Fry, in Devonshire Square,* or the Liverpool Institution

who also received training at Kaiserswerth, has branched out into new operations since this article was written. They and their excellent results are described with much sympathy in the last number of the *North British Review*, (February 1862). Besides the "Cottage Hospital" now placed at North Ormsby near Middlesborough, there is a "Branch Hospital" in Middlesborough itself, and a "Convalescent Home" (opened on Whit-Tuesday 1861) on the coast at Coatham; and now a "Penitents' Home" and an "Orphan Home" are projected. These houses, in addition to the benefit of the classes for which they are provided, present ways of usefulness and opportunities of training to ladies who are understood (unless hindered by some reasonable cause) to give themselves to the work for one year,

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* See *The Life of Mrs. Fry*, vol. ii. p. 383, and *The Life of Mrs. Opie*, pp. 242, 244, with which it is interesting to compare Southey's *Correspondence*, vol. vi. pp. 66—71. This institution was founded in 1840, "to provide experienced, "conscientious, and Christian Nurses for the sick, and to "raise the standard of this useful and important occupation, "so as to enlist the services of many who may be desirous of "devoting their time to the glory of God and to the mitigation "of human suffering." We quote from the last Report (1861), in which it is said, that besides the sending out of nurses to special cases of sickness among the poor, "one "or two Sisters are also now granted by the Committee to "devote the whole of their time to visiting the sick poor, "under the direction of the Clergy of the Parish to which "they are appointed." The total number of "Sisters" is now 83.

for the training and employment of Nurses, which was suggested at a much earlier period, and is

with the option of renewing the engagement year by year. The Archbishop gives his sanction, and full information will be given by the Rev. J. Postlethwaite, Coatham, Redcar.

(3) EXETER.—The pamphlet of Mr. Hayne, describing the beginning of his work at Buckland near Plymouth, is mentioned at the head of this article. The principles and progress of the "Home for Friendless Girls and Training "School for Domestic Servants," of which the Bishop is visitor, is further given in his recent pamphlet entitled *Preventive Helps before Penitential Remedies.* Mr. Hayne has now been joined "by several faithful and earnest "Christian women, who, like Phœbe the Deaconess, have "devoted themselves after the Scriptural example, *as ser-* "*vants of the Church.*" Here, instead of seventy or a hundred girls being under one matron, assisted by one or two schoolmistresses, "the girls can be classified and placed "in small numbers together, as sisters of one family, under "the special charge of one of these Deaconesses, who is to "them *as a mother,* to watch over them, to teach them, to "train them, to love them, to supply, in every possible way, "the loss of the earthly parent." Nor is the *family idea* lost when the girl leaves the Home. She is carefully placed out at service; communication is still kept up with her; and in case of need she finds her old Home *still a Home.* Besides what is described here, and the ordinary details of parochial work, there are at Buckland a Day school for girls kept by one Sister, a Night school for mining and factory girls kept by another, and also systematic teaching of farm servants *at the Farms.*

(4) ROCHESTER.—Since August 1860 a very important and encouraging work has gone on at Barnet (London, N.),

now in most successful operation.* And to turn to another side of the same great question, there

under the care of the Rev. W. Pennefather, whose two letters on the subject have been made widely known by publication in the *Record* and by general circulation. The present name of the Institution is the "Female Mission Training "Home:" and its purpose is to give a "preliminary training "to pious women desirous of labouring in the Lord's "vineyard, as Phœbe of old did." In the introduction to the first letter it is said, "That women have work to do at "Home and Abroad, which cannot be done by men, seems "to be once more acknowledged by the Church of Christ; "and that women are ready to do that work is now a plain "matter of fact." The plan is described to be to admit such women on good recommendation, "to test their "powers, train them in habits of domestic usefulness, and "send them forth, by means of existing agencies, into "suitable spheres of labour." Among the facilities and opportunities for accomplishing this result are Orphan Asylums, a Refuge for Fallen Women, and an Infirmary, besides the ordinary parochial schools of all kinds. Twenty or thirty persons have now been received; and of these one is now working at Cairo, one in India, one at Sierra Leone, and one is hoping to go to Syria.

(5) CHESTER.—At Liverpool, the Deaconess work, so far as it has advanced as yet, has proceeded by the method of *detached parochial efforts*. The subject was much discussed there in 1858. (See Appendix I.) An experiment was tried soon afterwards in St. John's parish, the work of the female agent being incorporated, under the clergyman's

* A slight account of this institution is given (by the writer of this article) in the *Englishwoman's Journal* for March 1859.

is the House of Mercy at Clewer, which, whatever difference of opinion there may be in regard to superintendence, with all the other parochial machinery; and the result has been eminently successful and satisfactory in all respects. New steps have now been taken for the extension of what has been so well begun. "Whether such "efforts and such success point to the founding of an *In-* "*stitution* must be determined by longer experience." This is quoted from a recent circular, in which it is added, that while the plan involves no antagonism to other systems of female agency, whether the agents be "Bible-women" or "District Nurses," both of which have lately been established in this town, "it is distinguished from the former by its "embracing the official employment of women of the higher "ranks, and by its organization being parochial; and from "the latter by its aiming chiefly at spiritual ends, while not "forgetting the temporal." The Secretary is the Rev. Dr. Taylor, 13 Newbie Terrace.

(6) LICHFIELD.—Through the generosity of the Earl of Dartmouth the spacious house of Sandwell near Birmingham has been for some years set apart for benevolent purposes; and it is hoped by many that it may become a Deaconess-Institution, partly as a home to those who may work in the "Black Country," which is immediately contiguous, but chiefly as a training-place for those who may be diffused through the diocese. It is now a home for widows, governesses, and other ladies in straitened circumstances, and also a school for girls who are destined for service, for girls of the middle class, and for boys intended for farm service or for trades. The former class have an opportunity of taking part in the instruction of the latter, while the latter class obtain practical training in what they do for the former. Another district in the same county, viz. the "Potteries," is in similar need of systematic feminine

some parts of its organization, and perhaps on account of this very difference of opinion, is an institution of no light importance. It has brought into existence the "Church Penitentiary Asso-"ciation;" and besides the work with which it originally began, it now embraces an Orphanage, and it is commencing operations in London among those classes of women who, without being criminal, are in danger of becoming so. To pass to the opposite extreme, we might mention excellent plans of female agency which are in the hands of Dissenters, not only in the metropolis, but in Leeds and other large towns. It would be easy to enter upon a wider enumeration;* but too many

ministration. Is it not possible that the North Staffordshire Infirmary might be made a centre from which such work might radiate?

It will be seen at once that these may all be centres of diocesan action, or of more general action, if that is preferred. It is interesting also to observe how varied are the starting-points, from which these operations have begun to move over the whole Deaconess field. The nursing of the sick, the care of children, the education of orphans, the training of servants, the rescue of criminal women, the protection of those who are in danger, missionary work abroad and parochial work at home,—these form the vast cycle of female agency to which our attention has been given above in the description of the Continental institutions.

* The notes in Appendix II. contain references to several societies and institutions which are not mentioned in the course of this article.

details might withdraw us from our main points. A few words on Bible-women and Sisterhoods may introduce the practical remarks to which we have been brought by a consideration of the whole subject.

The chief feature of the "Bible-woman" plan is, that female agents of the poorest class are employed, each under her superintending lady. The districts in which they labour are chosen with reference to the presumed wants of the population and the facilities for obtaining superintendence, without any necessary connection with parochial boundaries. The whole aggregate of these local agencies has been compared to beads strung on an elastic thread. And, independently of the usefulness of these poor women, penetrating as they do where others have never reached, and bringing together a vast amount of most important experience, there are advantages in the very looseness of these arrangements. Flexibility in this case is strength. But still the Bible-woman plan has its weak points, or rather there are strong points which do not and cannot belong to it.

Leaving aside the question of payment, which has been discussed elsewhere, it excludes, in the first place, from its direct agents all those who are of a social grade above the lowest. There is some risk lest it should lead people to mistake for a truth a most mischievous fallacy, viz., that only

the poor can work beneficially among the poor. Among the ardent advocates of a new enterprise there is always some danger of extremes. The real fact is, that the poor have peculiar advantages in dealing with the poor, and the wealthy and educated have peculiar advantages in dealing with them also. Our object is not merely to descend to the lowest levels of our population, but, as regards religion, to bring up the lower strata to the level of the higher. Besides the professional employment of poor women, we require the professional employment of those who have a higher culture and a higher social position. If the two were properly organized, each would assist and strengthen the other. "Bible-women" ought not to hinder, but rather to prepare the way for "Deaconesses."

But again, looking at the matter from a Church-of-England point of view, we cannot help noticing that the Bible-woman agency is not interwoven with any parochial machinery. A clergyman, within the limits of whose district a female missionary of this class may be working, would have no right to make her services definitely subservient to his own plans, to use her help in conjunction with that of his curate and other agents for seeking out cases of distress, for visiting the sick, for promoting attendance at public worship, or for teaching in his Sunday-school. She may not even

be a Churchwoman; and there is no guarantee as to the peculiar shade of doctrine she may prefer, the place of worship to which she gives her adherence, and the school at which she may urge the children to attend. It will be natural for her to give her warmest enthusiasm to that communion, whatever it may be, in connection with which she herself has received the greatest spiritual benefit. Moreover, where there is a connection with the Bible Society, the claim upon the agents' time is considerable for the mere selling and distributing of Bibles, which is perhaps the least important portion of the really parochial Diaconate. We write in no spirit of hostility or even of faint praise: very far from it. And we well know how heartily and generously some Nonconformists in London have cooperated with the parochial clergy, with regard to the labours of the Bible-women. But the system itself is not and cannot be parochial. The Church of England has a certain established position and a high vantage-ground for usefulness; and we must not forget this when we are discussing the female Diaconate. We cannot be surprised that in the metropolis a plan has now been set on foot for employing a similar agency to that described in the "Missing Link," and avowedly suggested by it, but "under the "direction of the parochial clergy and in distinct "connection with the Church." No collision

ought to be dreamt of between these "Parochial-"mission" women and the "Bible-mission" women. There is ample room for both. But the subject ought to be fairly looked at in the light in which we are here presenting it. There must often be a danger lest the parochial plan and the general plan of employing female agency should disturb one another. Without care and consideration, misunderstandings may easily arise. At the confluence of two streams the water is apt to become turbid, especially when the course of either or both of them has been short and impetuous.

We turn now to the "Sisterhood," which presents the opposite extreme of what is doing in England in the matter of female agency; and we must frankly confess that Sisterhoods have great advantages in the strength and support which come from close association and sympathy, in the benefit of combined devotions, in the sense of a common home, and in the firm fulcrum supplied for looser and more remote operations. And here again we write in no spirit of antagonism. It is never wise to speak with disrespect of anything which implies deep religious feeling and patient self-denial. We must further say that there are two classes of work to which we think Sisterhoods are peculiarly adapted, namely, the recovery of fallen women and the nursing of the sick in hospitals. It is only when there is some impenetrable mystery in a

Sisterhood that we are inclined to become indignant. Wherever there is mystery there is suspicion, and to excite even causeless suspicion, in controversial times, is inexcusable. Moreover, if Sisterhoods have their good points, they have certainly their dangers. The *esprit de corps*, unless it is diluted with widely-diffused work, may consolidate itself into conventual stiffness. Even religious ritual may become too exclusively absorbing. The relation of the Sisters to the chaplain must be a matter of the most critical importance in regard to the formation of religious faith and character. Superstitious notions regarding celibacy may grow up, even where there is an express clause in a statute announcing that retirement at any moment is optional. Definitions will not keep everything safe. Questionable sentiments may become prevalent in a community in spite of rules; and when this is the case, questionable doctrine may insensibly associate itself with practices which in themselves are quite innocent. Besides this, we must add that Sisterhoods are not parochial. Mr. Hayne has noticed this defect. Writing as he does from the diocese of Exeter, he might have added that one eminent Sisterhood was not even diocesan.*

Thus we have been brought gradually to the view which, on the whole, in our opinion, offers the most

* See Preface.

hopeful prospect for the future in England. We return to our old definition, and we can give it now with a little closer precision than before. The English Deaconess should be something between the desultory Lady Visitor and the member of a strictly conventual Sisterhood. On the Continent we have seen that, in harmony with the primitive idea of the office, the due medium can be maintained between ecclesiastical absorption on the one hand and family distractions on the other. We cannot conceive that this is impossible in England. Not that we would counsel any slavish imitations of what has been done by other countries. There is a German way and there is an English way, as in everything else, so in this matter of the female Diaconate. And the English way is to be found out by gradual and cautious experiment, conducted in a devout spirit, with the great religious end kept steadily in view, and with a constant regard to popular feelings and prejudices. If it becomes evident that, under certain forms, a female Diaconate will never cordially be accepted by the English people, under those forms it ought not to be attempted. Nor need the experiments be absolutely similar in all places and under all circumstances. Details may vary while principles are the same. There are local as well as general prejudices; and classes of society have their theological preferences and panics. The diocese of

Oxford or Exeter might tolerate what would be fatal in that of Chester or Ripon. With many of the more educated of our people, a cross, or a religious picture, has an exaggerated value, while with Workhouse guardians, even a bonnet might utterly destroy the prospects of a most useful undertaking.*

* At the Kaiserswerth Conference, in answer to the question whether, besides the ordinary Deaconess costume, it would be "good for the Sisters to bear some other outward marks "of their office, as, for instance, a cross worn round the neck," Pastor Fliedner gave an account of a conversation which he had had some years before with the late King of Prussia at Stolzenfels. The King told him he had lately been asked to give to the Sisters of a newly-founded Deaconess-House the title of "Sisters of the Holy Cross," with permission to wear a cross. He asked Fliedner what he thought of this. In answer, Fliedner first begged permission to communicate to His Majesty part of the experience of Pastor Härter, "one of the most true-hearted champions of the Protestant "Church against the Roman." At first Härter caused the members of the Strasburg Institution to wear a small silver cross, with their Deaconess motto engraved on it, "Christ is "my Life and Death is my gain." But soon he learnt that all sorts of rumours and suspicions were going through Alsace, and that the Deaconess cause was suffering injury. He found, too, that the Sisters would be sufficiently recognised and valued without the cross, and that the wearing of the symbol promoted in them conceit rather than humility. The custom was consequently abandoned. "Now," said Fliedner to His Majesty, "would it not be better to avoid "what is inevitably viewed in Prussia as a Shibboleth of "Romanism? would it be wise thus to bring the Deaconess

Let it be remembered that the great and essential feature of the Deaconess, as described in this paper, is, that she should be *professionally* set apart for her work.* All other parts of the subject, as it appears to us, however important (and many of them are deeply important), are matters of detail. Let the English people once become familiarized

" cause into jeopardy during its early days? Will it not " please your Majesty to allow us to retain that same sim- " plicity of womanly dress which is commended by St. Peter " and St. Paul, instead of giving any fresh food to the vanity " to which the poor hearts of our Deaconesses are as much in- " clined as those of other children of men?" The King spent a long time in thought, and then said, "Yes! yes! I " am quite of your opinion" (pp. 62, 63). This German scene is the more worthy of being reproduced here, as in Germany there is less prejudice against the use of outward religious symbols than among ourselves. And the cross is merely an illustration of a general class of subjects. As regards this emblem, it may be said very truly that the whole principle is given up by the use of the cross in baptism, to say nothing of the custom of placing it on our churches. But religious prejudices do not generally follow the line of logical consistency. The great principle which was insisted on at the Conference (p. 63), is the rule of St. Paul (Rom. xiv. and 1 Cor. viii.) against causing scandal or distressing the consciences of others. There is no point of Christian morals on which the Apostle insists more strongly.

* The further point essential to the definition, viz., that *sufficient ecclesiastical recognition* must be given to the Deaconess, is discussed below.

with the idea that it is right and natural, and Christian, for women, as well as men, so to devote themselves, and everything else will probably be adjusted easily in harmony with our ecclesiastical and social peculiarities.* Questions of direct or indirect remuneration, of social rank, of costume,

* No verbal definition of a Deaconess has been given by Convocation; but a sufficiently practical one can be gathered from the discussions and the general consent of that body. When the subject was first brought forward, in February 1858, in the Report on Home and Foreign Missions, "the "wider and *more definite* use of the services of Christian "women in every rank of life" was recommended; and, besides the work of "*District-Visiting*," it was particularly said that "*Nurses, trained* for attendance upon the sick, might "render important service to the cause of *religion*." The motion of Canon Seymour, accepted in principle by Canon Woodgate, spoke of "women whose hearts God had moved "to devote themselves *exclusively* to works of piety and "charity;" but he desired to see some "terms and conditions "distinctly known as those which the Church of England "has sanctioned and prescribed." Mr. Dale's publication enables us to follow the subject through the later debates of 1861 and 1862 to the close, when the Lower House, in its address to the Upper, spoke of Christian women "devoting "themselves within the Church of England *definitely to the* "*aid of Christ's Ministers* in alleviating the sorrows of the "sick and suffering, and in other pious and charitable "works;" and when the Upper House in reply said, that "such efforts deserve *all the encouragement which the Church* "*can give them*," and recommended, that "guidance be sought "directly from the *Parochial Clergy* and the *Bishops*."

phraseology, and residence, may be left to find their solution according to experience. We have not concealed our own predilections on some of these points, and we have endeavoured to contribute some useful suggestions from foreign sources. But these are not the main questions, or those with which the practical beginning ought to be made. If we start from the notion of a Deaconess-Institution, complete in all its parts, we may fail from the very perfection of our thought. The English people do not like abstractions. With us an ideal is best reached through practice. And even in Germany, it should be remembered, the results which we have described were attained only after long experiment and many struggles.

Of the minor questions, perhaps the most important is whether Deaconesses should live in community or not? It may be found in the end desirable for the practical realization of the work, for the sake of training the agents and consolidating the system, that communities should be formed; but it is not really necessary to the essence of the work that the question should be decided immediately. Our conviction is, that by far the most encouraging prospect is afforded by detached parochial efforts, conducted with some degree of mutual understanding. Besides the reasons to which we formerly adverted, namely, that the parochial most nearly resembles the primitive Diaconate, and that

it is the most urgently needed in England,* it is at the same time the least likely to excite prejudices; and it is the least likely to produce that jar of social distinctions which is always to be apprehended in the midst of an artificial civilization. When those who belong to different grades of society are brought into close and almost equal cooperation, this danger is considerable; but not so when the efforts are detached and independent, and each under the superintendence of a parochial clergyman. Moreover, we think the very flexibility of such plans supplies a guarantee for permanence. An institution suddenly built up on a very strict method is apt to die with its founders, but a system of parochial work admits of easy adaptation. It may be weak in this parish, and strong in that, according to the character of those who superintend it; but the system itself lives on, and may be expected to result in institutions which have safe experience for their basis. In a word, we would counsel in England a different process from that of Germany. There the institutions have been first founded and have gradually ramified into parochial work; here we should be disposed rather to look in parochial work for those elements which will gradually combine into a solid institution.

Meantime there can be no reason why those

* See above p. 95.

who feel that their opportunities and convictions encourage them to begin to form training-schools for female agents should hesitate to enter on the undertaking. Mr. Hayne seems to be in this position, and we know at least one other case of much hopefulness.* By all means let such enterprises be begun and persevered in. No one who has had experience of the difficulty of obtaining suitable matrons for Reformatories, and other benevolent foundations, can hesitate to say that a supply of persons tested and trained for such work would be an inestimable blessing. If these various efforts proceed with steady perseverance, and in a spirit of mutual charity, their results will gradually draw into combination. Kindred drops, after a little hesitation, will come together and mingle into one. There is another consideration likewise, of very great importance, which recommends this gradual and prudent progress. If a female diaconate is to be incorporated into our ecclesiastical system it can only be under the sanction and authority of the Bishops.† Such sanction and

* This is the instance mentioned in p. 131 n. as furnished in the Diocese of Rochester.

† See the extract from Hooker, given above, p. 47. Many will feel that the title "Deaconess," being an ecclesiastical name, could not rightly be assumed without ecclesiastical recognition and sanction. But there is a danger of giving too rigidly clerical a significance to the term. It seems to us that if the work is officially and

authority will certainly not be given prematurely. Some might eagerly desire (and we certainly should not object) that Deaconesses here should be set apart by the laying on of hands. We have seen that this custom has grown up, easily and naturally, in Protestant communities elsewhere; but the difficulties are considerably greater in England. It is true that a distinction can be drawn, as we have shown was the case in primitive times, between a solemn benediction and a formal ordination.* But our Bishops would not be willing to commit themselves so seriously and authoritatively to any crude system of female agency. Nor would they, in our opinion, be justified in doing so. They may, however, knowing the pressing needs of their own parishes, be expected to look with favour on tentative efforts to establish a practical

deliberately undertaken, and formally approved by the Bishop, this is enough to meet the requirements of the case, and in harmony with the characteristics of the primitive female Diaconate, as argued above and in Appendix IV. The question is now practically solved for us by the sanction given by the Bishop of London to the Deaconess-Institution which was opened last November. See p. 129 n.

* This distinction seems to be kept in view at Clewer, where the Sisters are set apart by the laying on of hands. The ceremony is called *confirmation*. The same sanction may have been given, and in the same way, to other Sisterhoods in other districts; but on this point we have no exact information. See Preface.

diaconate of women. And there is one course, intermediate between passive discouragement and irrevocable sanction, which, we think, well deserves the consideration of all who have influence. A Bishop's *licence* might do in this case what it does in others—might countenance without incurring risks—might give safety to the steps which are being taken towards the establishment of a permanent institution.*

It has not escaped our recollection that the very word "Deaconess," which we have used incessantly throughout this paper, will provoke some doubt and discussion even among those who cordially approve of the office which the word describes. We do not care to argue much on this subject, though our own opinion is strong. If any other title is better, by all means let it be chosen, so long as

* Since this was written, the progress of public opinion has been more rapid than could have been anticipated, and there will be a general agreement with what Canon Seymour said in 1861, when he expressed his conviction that "some "well-considered and solemn act of the Church is required, "both to promote such institutions and to do them justice "when established;" and asked, whether it is better "to "leave such ministrations to chance or to guide and guard "them by wise laws" (*Debate*, pp. 50—53) and with what Canon Kennaway said in 1862: "We wish that the "Church should not vacate her office, and that she should not "let a holy institution like this grow up in her bosom "without being nourished by her hand" (p. 19).

the work itself is done. If the use of the word "Deaconess" hinders the establishment of an actual diaconate, then let it be thrust aside with every other real or fanciful impediment. We could not ourselves have avoided the use of it in what we have written concerning the earliest Christianity, for this was the word used in primitive times. Nor without it could we have described the female diaconate of the Continent; for it was deliberately chosen in the consciousness that this diaconate was the reproduction of the primitive institution. And herein we think we supply two cogent arguments for the employment of the term by ourselves. It is Primitive and it is Protestant. It has never been appropriated by Roman Catholics. It is also very simple and very descriptive. A single word which contains in itself a definition is invaluable.* Some other designations which have been proposed, such

* In answer to the objection that the word "Deaconess" has too clerical a sound, it has been well remarked that this is only the case in clerical ears; that with the laity it would not be so, since among them the "Deacon" is never or scarcely ever known by that name. We may add that it is very unfortunate that the Deacon has been brought with us into too high a relative clerical position. To these remarks may now be added that the term in question is actually appropriated in the Church of England, since the opening of the Deaconess-Institution in London under Episcopal sanction, to say nothing of the general weight of the recent discussion in Convocation.

as "Female Agent," or "Female Missionary," are to our apprehension both clumsy and timid. It is bad policy to give an unpleasing name to a good office. A more attractive combination of which we have heard is "Missionary Sister," but in the first place the word "Missionary" is not applicable to all parts of the female diaconate,* and, in the next place, the term "Sister" involves all those risks which the term "Deaconess" avoids. It is true that the word "Sister" is beautiful, expressive, and real, as applied to all the work which we have been describing; it has also been traditionally used for centuries in some of the London hospitals:† but still it is connected in the public mind with Romanist associations, and therefore great prudence is requisite in the use of it. Let the same principle be applied, if it is really applicable, to the word "Deaconess" also. Every reasonable objection ought to be fairly met. We conclude by noticing a few popular objections, not to the word, but to the office.

Notwithstanding all the caution and moderation which we have advocated in the establishment of

* The same objection applies with still greater force to the term "Nurse," which has been proposed.

† To this we may add the use of the word in the above-mentioned Institution of "Nursing Sisters" (p. 130), which has no distinctly marked ecclesiastical character.

English Deaconesses, and notwithstanding the arguments in favour of such an institution which we have adduced from Scripture and the Primitive Church, it is still possible that the fear of Romanism or semi-Romanism may recur to those whose disposition is favourable to our subject, or may be used controversially by those who wish to hinder what they vaguely dislike. To the hot controversialist we would put such direct questions as these. Is it safe for us to remain any longer without some better organization of female labour? Who make the greater number of conversions to Romanism, the Priests or the Sisters of Mercy? How is it possible that we can carry the day by means of sermons, speeches, and tracts, against the silent influence of gentle persuasion and self-denying help? The Sister of Charity can sit down with the poor mother in her time of domestic discomfort, talk with her about her sick children, counsel the use of gentle words to her profligate husband, and thus bring a ray of light to a miserable home, and find a way to the heart. And meanwhile a change is going on which may be quite unknown to the learned student in his library, and which the orator on the platform can certainly not arrest. Moreover, it is evident that the great question of female agency is one of growing interest, and may not now be lightly set aside. And even if we assume that there is danger, and

that the movement may take a wrong direction, the practical inquiry which demands attention is this:—whether it is better to oppose and so to strengthen, or to appropriate and so to disarm. But, after all, the great argument on which we lay stress in dealing with this topic is, that the establishment of Deaconesses on the Continent is associated with, and has arisen out of, the most distinct, determined, and orthodox Protestantism. We could easily give a multitude of proofs.* As regards Kaiserswerth we could quote passage after passage from the authorized books, to show how strongly justification by faith is insisted on, and all notion of self-righteousness repudiated. The motive held before the Deaconesses is that which is defined in the preface to a collection of the first ten reports, as "thankful love to the Saviour who "has redeemed us, and done all for us."† As to Fliedner's own feeling towards the Church of Rome, one illustration may suffice for all. We were speaking with him of the colonies which he had recently planted in distant countries. One group of Deaconesses had within the last few

* We well remember (this important question having possession of our mind and giving keenness to our eyesight) that in one Institution the first pictures which we saw were portraits, not merely of Melanchthon and Luther, but of Zwingle and Knox; and in another, that the first book which we saw in the pastor's library was Calvin's *Institutes*.

† P. vii.

months gone to Bucharest. He added, with considerable zest, that another was just on the point of starting for Florence,—"there, he said," like Hannibal, to fight the Pope on his own ground."* So with regard to the other institutions. That at Strasburg was founded at a Reformation Festival; that at Riehen on the anniversary of Luther's birthday. We have already been explicit as regards the religious principle which rules at Saint-Loup. Nor need we say more concerning Paris. The determined and continued hostility of the Church of Rome there is the best answer to the objection before us.

We are met, however, very frequently by another argument, to which the answer is not so simple. It is said that such an institution as that of Continental Deaconesses is not "English" and would never succeed here. This, like all vague objections, is difficult to deal with. We might indeed reply: "If not English now, the sooner it becomes English "the better." But this answer is hardly enough: it would only be accepted as a retort; and a retort seldom convinces. It is better to inquire whether there is any definite basis for the objection expressed

* We recollect soon afterwards seeing a blue gown among the brown gowns of Saint-Loup. One of this Kaiserswerth group had been sent there to improve her French before going to Florence. This is not a bad illustration of the friendly spirit which prevails among the Deaconess-Institutions in spite of differences of detail.

in this general phrase. And we confess with sorrow and shame that we do think some such basis does really exist.

So far as there is a ground for this objection, it is not to be sought in that mere domestic feeling, on which we justly set so high a value. The German woman is even more domestic than the English; her circle is more restricted; she appears less frequently in public: to say nothing of the vast number of women in this country, who, as we have already noticed, have no homes, except such as they may make for themselves. Nor again is it any mere shrinking from publicity. If this were alleged, we might answer that there is no more publicity in the work of a Deaconess than in a thousand employments to which our ladies are well accustomed. Moreover, if there were publicity, it would cease to be peculiarity, in proportion as the office should become recognised and familiar. The reason why England, which produces more authoresses than Germany, is likely perhaps at first to produce fewer Deaconesses, is not to be found in the love of domestic privacy. We believe that the difficulty, so far as there is a difficulty, is to be referred to two very different causes—to our religious party spirit, and to the artificial distinctions of our social life.

Partly from the influence of a very natural alarm, and partly from the indulgence of a mere

habit of controversy, many amongst us have become seriously fettered in the free exercise both of their judgement and action. Clergymen have so committed themselves to a certain kind of partizanship, that, even if convinced of all the truth of our arguments, they might fear lest a public avowal to this effect would endanger their usefulness. Hence the temptation to have recourse to passive resistance, and to vague hints of the possible risks involved in what is new to English Protestantism. None are so much enslaved as those who are prominent in party warfare. Nor are the lay people at all more free from this kind of bondage. As regards educated women, well-established in the principles of the Reformation (and it is to such as these that we must look with hope), it requires no small amount of moral courage to take the attitude of a Primitive or Continental Deaconess, if they are to be denounced by their friends and suspected of having secretly abandoned their Evangelical faith. The worst foes of the Deaconess are "they of her own household."

But in another and a lower sense, this is painfully true. Our wealth and prosperity have developed amongst us a very artificial state of life, and created a number of conventional distinctions, which are seen to be of serious import, when they are found to be hindrances to the practical work of Christianity. The very civilization which has

brought together large masses of the poorer people in a state of isolation from the richer, has fostered certain modes of thought and habits of life among the latter, which make it more difficult than ever to obtain from them the labourers in works of charity, at the very time when such labourers are more than ever needed. We dignify this dishonourable feature of our social condition by various plausible and fallacious names. We boast of our English comfort, quite forgetting that comfort may possibly mean luxury and self-indulgence, and neglecting to test our phrases and practices by the teaching of the New Testament. Or we say that a higher standard of Christianity is attained when a lady lives at home with her mother and sisters, and at the same time does what she can among the poor: as if we were engaged in a theoretical comparison of the relative excellence of different modes of life, instead of trying to find out how we are to supply mothers and sisters to the multitudes, who have none in any true sense of the words. The fact is, our comfortable homes are an enchanted ground, on which it is very difficult to awake, even when the voice of the poor is ringing in our ears; and, in many cases, the very facilities of our religious advantages have added to the potency of the charm.*

* A lady's pen, in an unexpected quarter, writes far more severely than we have done. The writer in the *North British*

But this is not by any means the whole of the evil. Much of our luxury could hardly dare to call itself by any other name. If the love of comfort is a pervading and passive hindrance, fashion and the pride of station are open and very powerful enemies. We are by no means here alluding particularly to the aristocracy. The danger is probably greater among those, who, as their wealth accumulates, are prone to imitate and to exaggerate. The aristocracy, however, have this advantage, that whatever good example they may set will probably be followed. We heard it quaintly remarked the other day that "a woman of one gown" among the higher classes would be a public benefactor. We have known well-bred and well-educated women, simply brought up, to have been utterly perplexed and shocked by the elaboration of display conspicuous in those who appear to be not only benevolent but devout. These remarks would be mere impertinent criticism, if they were not intended to set our sensitive separation of classes in its true light—as a hindrance to that organization of female agency, which we have shown to be so

Review blames "the prevailing disposition to regard the "social and domestic type of Christianity as the highest, if "not its only type," asserts that the atmosphere of modern family-life is hostile to the spirit of self-sacrifice, and says, with gentle sarcasm, that "we can approve of self-devotion "when we see that without it we could not have had the "steam-engine."

important. On the Continent life is simpler, social differences are less strongly marked, and cooperation therefore is easier.

Here, however, we must beware of exaggeration. Our separations and gradations rest in some degree upon realities. The German lady is more accustomed than the English to attend to small household details; the German servant often rises to a higher level than the English, in voice and manner and perception of what is pleasing: thus from both causes there is approximation on the Continent, where there is divergence with us. All this suggests caution. We must take our circumstances as we find them. If we force refinement into close contact with vulgarity, a discord is inevitable. But all this is no reason why we should not attempt to form a diaconate of women in England. As we have said above, there is a German way and an English way; and our business is to find out the English way. Our very difficulties ought to stimulate us. We cannot know that the difficulties are really great till we try to overcome them. In a hospital or a penitentiary, the gradations of rank are easily maintained. In an institution for the training of Deaconesses, the discomforts of those of higher grade would be less in proportion to their numbers. In the parish diaconate, the objection vanishes, for the female labourer there may be dissociated from whatever is uncon-

genial. Nor are we without hope that a large organization of Deaconesses would have a tendency to react on whatever is unreal in our civilization. False habits of thought frequently give way before true practice. At all events, we must hold fast to the belief that social improvements are possible, and that they are usually gradual. There was a time when it was not English for a well-born lady to nurse a wounded common soldier; but we believe now that it will never cease to be English. So we hope that the Deaconesses of the future will destroy some of the conventionalities of the present.

But again our objector rises undismayed, and says, with grave discouragement,—"It is a vain "endeavour; you will never obtain them: all the "good and energetic women find their own "spheres of usefulness, and work in them well; "and women of any other character are unfit for "Deaconesses." Now, was this true in Germany before 1835? If so, we may hope that a change may take place in England after 1860. But was it ever true anywhere? One great advantage of a systematic and well-arranged diaconate is, that it provides a place for the gentle and retiring as well as the energetic, for those who must be encouraged and lead as well as for those who have vigour to originate and direct. In the Deaconess-Institutions of the Continent, the numbers have gone on steadily increasing. So with the Bible-

Women of London—the candidates pour in like a flood. So it must ever be—work creates the workers. Organization is of the utmost value, not only in facilitating labour, but in suggesting it. Established institutions have great power to remind people of duties which they would otherwise forget. And we must remember, too, that we are here on the religious side of that great question of remunerative female employment which at present receives a bad answer in the excessive supply of dejected governesses and distressed needlewomen. The mere prospect of an assured home, kind sympathy, and support in old age, would bring out many labourers who long to be useful. And we are here on the lowest ground. In a far higher sense we believe it to be most true, that it is incumbent on us, not simply to utilise, but to relieve, aspirations after self-devotion. In this country, as elsewhere, many women have "a "strong desire to serve God in missionary offices, "especially among those of their own sex." Let prejudices be softened down—let conventional hindrances be removed—let the facilities of system be provided—and we have no fear for the result. England has many a Priscilla: let the opportunity be given and she will have many a Phœbe. Almost every neighbourhood can show its Nicarete: we do not see why every parish, in due course of years, should not have its poor or wealthy Olympias.

On the question of funds (if the objection is intended to include this) we do not think it necessary to waste a word. If once the public mind were convinced of the hopefulness of this scheme, ample contributions would be forthcoming. Nor need the Clergyman fear lest the cost of his Deaconesses should impair his ability to supply other wants. They would reinforce all his parochial machinery, and indirectly increase all his resources. Moreover, female agency, besides being in some respects more efficient, is always less expensive than that of men. Will it be said that on this very account it is objectionable, as tending to take the bread from the Curate and the Scripture-reader? But, after all, this is the argument which receives so cruel an illustration—if those stories are still true—from the Potteries, where men will not allow the women to use a rest for the hand in painting china; or from the watchmaking-trade, where the wife is forbidden to work with her husband, lest employment should be taken from some other man. Surely in our parishes, if anywhere, there should be "communion of labour."

But again the same voice is heard:—"Obtain "your Deaconesses; train them, if you will; put "them to their parochial or other work: they will "become arrant gossips, and probably they will "quarrel." We should not have thought of this objection had we never heard it gravely urged.

If there were no gossip among district visitors now—if there were no quarrels among our clergy—we might think it necessary to write a grave answer. We must remind our objector, that at least we have some guarantee in the deliberate choice of a life; and we must express our doubt whether women seriously engaged in a serious occupation are as much disposed as men to gossip and to quarrel. Still we must admit the possibility of such evils. Such was St. Paul's feeling. Thus, while he gives copious directions regarding the character and duties of the elder women, he is cautious, and more than cautious, about the "younger widows;"* yet he does not think it necessary on that account to abolish the female diaconate. So in writing to the Philippians, he says: "I beseech Euodia and beseech Syntyche, "that they be of the same mind in the Lord;" and still he recognizes in the same context the labour of women that was associated with his own, as a subject of thankfulness and joy.†

The lighter part of the last objection leads us to another; on which, in fact, we have touched

* 1 Tim. v. 9—16.

† Philipp. iv. 2, 3. See above, p. 53. Canon Kennaway in the recent debate in Convocation, laid great and just stress on this passage, remarking that the words in the original "show distinct and even hard fellow-workmanship with "the Apostle."

already. In all the provisions which regard the social employments of women, there is always one contingency which must be regarded as possible, and the more so in proportion as the women are estimable, charming, and useful. At the close of every story comes the question of marriage. In two ways this question might be presented as a very formidable obstacle to any organization of Deaconesses. It might be said either that marriages will be so frequent as to thwart all our plans and cause perpetual disappointment, or else that a feeling may grow up that the marriages of women so set apart are indecorous and almost sinful, and that this would be a mischievous superstition. Now, what is really the case in the Continental institutions? We have felt it right to inquire very closely into this matter, and we are able not only to quote facts, but to give impressions derived from very frank conversations. In speaking with Dr. Fliedner and M. Germond, who may be taken as representatives of the German and French phases of our subject, we were met with such remarks as these, uttered half in joke and half in regret:—"Ah, yes! we have "too many marriages: this is the Enfield rifle "which ruins us: these young parsons and school-"masters will take long shots at our Deaconesses." But then it was gravely added, "The Bible leaves "marriage free: and we must also." And we

found, on careful inquiry, that the marriages are really very few—perhaps at the rate of one a year in a large and widely-spread institution.* But we have ventured to speak on this delicate subject, not only to chaplains and founders, but to Deaconesses themselves. One of them remarked, with much simplicity and feeling,—"The Apostle says, "'It is better so to remain;' but then if our Sisters "remain, they ought to do so, not for the Institu-"tion's sake, but for the sake of the Lord's work." And then she added, with some vivacity, "I sup-"pose many women in England have refused "marriage because they can serve God better "single." And another Deaconess, in a different institution, put the matter thus:—"A married "woman has a life of more ease and comfort, "instead of a hard life like ours; but then, as the "Apostle says, she has more afflictions. Besides "this, our life is itself an education; and if it is "a good discipline for us, it is so for the married "woman." No doubt it is very disappointing, when the house has done so much in training, and educating, and providing opportunities of usefulness, to lose those who are so well prepared; but their usefulness is carried within the sphere of domestic life, instead of being more widely exercised. And it is evident, from the conversations

* In connection with the Strasburg Institution, there have been eighteen marriages in eighteen years.

which we have quoted, that no discredit is attached to such marriages. In fact we know a case where Deaconesses were bridesmaids.* Moreover, we think such occasional marriages are a positive advantage, as tending to bind up the Deaconess-work with the associations of family life: the benefit probably quite counterbalances the loss. On the whole it is evident that, in the formidable subject of marriage, there is nothing which need be taken into account as a disturbing influence, on either of the above-mentioned grounds. Matrimony has not hindered these institutions from continual and growing success; and as to superstition, we may probably leave this on one side, when we find that those for whom we fear are in the habit of studying Holy Scripture intelligently, and referring their lives to its suggestions.†

* Here, again, is a practical answer to one of Madame de Gasparin's theoretical objections, that no one would dare to propose marriage "à de si saintes filles."

† A totally different and quite unexpected objection, but one which is evidently seriously felt in some quarters, demands at least attention in a note. We give the substance from a correspondent, whose long and practical consideration of the whole subject gives him a right to be heard.

It is doubted whether, in the case of Primitive Deaconesses, marriage was ever contemplated as allowable,—stress is laid on what St. Paul says (1 Tim. v. 11, 12) concerning "the casting aside of the first pledge," and this is coupled with his expressed approval elsewhere (1 Cor. vii. 34—38) of the deliberate choice of a single life in certain cases and

We would not willingly leave any objection unnoticed. One other still remains, which is

under safe conditions; the Council of Carthage (A.D. 392), at which St. Augustine was present, is quoted as prohibiting marriage to Deaconesses (can. civ. Fleury xx. 32). It is said, again, that English ladies, acting statedly in this kind of Diaconate, would, if presumed to be marriageable, be placed sometimes in most painful and delicate positions; it is suggested that some women (not the best) might even seek the office with thoughts of marriage in their mind, while the most womanly and most devoted would be deterred by the possibility of such disturbance, and would be tempted to prefer a system which would secure them from what they voluntarily resign.

To this we would venture to reply, that all such things should be left to the operation of natural laws, in reliance on that guiding of God's grace, which may surely be taken for granted in this instance—that we very much doubt whether the earliest Deaconesses were precluded from marriage (see Appendix IV.),—that whatever restrictions grew up afterwards were parallel with those restrictions on the marriage of the Clergy themselves, which we have thrown aside as unwise and unscriptural—that in the case of one who, with considerable experience and a certain maturity of age, combines "a distinct aptitude and love for "such methods of attending upon the Lord without dis-"traction, as are incompatible with domestic life," the temptation to marriage is really very small—while on the other hand, without vows, which are not to be thought of, we can have no absolute or infallible security.

But, after all, the discussion of such questions is perhaps of less practical importance than appears at first sight. On any view of these difficulties, is not the wise conclusion this, —that if our system were mature, it would be a good rule that

plausible at first sight, and which beyond doubt ought to be seriously dealt with. It is sometimes thought that a systematic organization of charity will discourage and abridge those voluntary efforts of charity which are now made in abundance; and this in two ways—first by fostering the notion of substitution and the practice of paying others to do what we ought to do ourselves—and secondly by taking the heart out of those who do work, and degrading them to mere philanthropic machines. We believe that these arguments have been urged on the Continent. We frequently hear them among ourselves. As to the first head, there is, no doubt, always some danger of vicarious charity. But this remark is applicable to every kind of association for charitable purposes. Ladies who live in the midst of affluence very often pacify their consciences by a subscription, when they ought themselves to do some work among the poor. But this is far less likely to be the case when a good example of efficient work is set before them, and when a definite path is marked

no one should be *a Deaconess, accepted and approved by authority*, before the age of forty, or thirty-five at the earliest? A long period of *Probation* would have the double advantage of allowing a retirement into married life which no one could censure, and of securing to the Church a vast amount of useful service, which itself would be an admirable training for any position; while it might safely be predicted that the Deaconesses (defined as above) would hardly ever marry.

out, in which they see that their cooperation would be valuable.* And what we urge here theoretically, is amply demonstrated by experience to be true. The Bible-women in London have brought into the field of active labour many ladies, who had benevolent impulses, but who previously did not know how or where to begin. Such we have observed to be the process in other large towns. And in the course of what we have written we have given illustrations of the same truth from the Continent.† Good work always has a tendency to produce good work. Even with a very light support we sometimes see a beautiful activity spreading and ripening, which would fall to the ground without it. We all know what Committees are; how frivolous the excuses for neglect or absence, how great the lack of moral courage, how heavy the burden on the one member who has a conscience. If the Deaconess were to supplant some Committees, probably no harm would result. But to many Committees she would give new heart, because they would feel that in her they had gained a right hand.

But again it is said that Christian charity comes from the affections, that judicious benevolence is an instinct, that love needs no training. There is just enough truth in this argument to constitute

* See more on this point in Appendix II.

† See above, pp. 94, 99, 122.

it a plausible delusion to those who will not think. But if it is gravely contended that the religiously-minded woman, who is to labour among the poor, in nursing the sick, in instructing the ignorant, in rescuing the degraded, is the less likely to work heartily, affectionately, and wisely, because all her time is given to the task, because she has received a systematic training, and because others have been associated with her in the preparation, we confess that we cannot gravely attempt an answer. Such an argument would justify us in saying that our women will be better wives and mothers if they receive no instruction in domestic duties (which indeed is too often the case)—that our clergymen will better understand the spiritual needs of their flock if their education has been left to accident (and indeed it would seem as if this were the creed of some)—that our Volunteers would be braver if they never were drilled (and here at least the country will be all on one side).

We believe we have noticed all serious objections: others, no doubt, with some ingenuity, might be produced and successively overthrown. And this might not be without amusement as an intellectual game; but it would be of very little practical benefit. When a great question is to be decided on broad general principles, it is seldom wise to

spend much time at the outset on details. We must now leave before the public what we have written with no light sense of its serious importance. If our view is correct, there is a great work to be done in and by the English Church, which as yet has been attempted only in a few places and on a small scale. Our conviction is deep and earnest, that the most urgent want of modern Christianity in England is the organization of female agency—that if the Gospel is to have a stronger power over the next generation than it has over the present, we must look chiefly to our women—and that such a Diaconate as that which we have here commended will be the best help to the realization of the maxim, which is a principle of religious as well as worldly policy, "*Gagnez* " *les femmes.*"

APPENDIX I.

SUNDAY SCHOOLS AND DEACONESSES.*

A SUBJECT which has been proposed to myself for consideration is expressed in the following terms: — "The difficulties arising from the removal of "the educated classes from our large towns; and "the best means of obtaining a proper supply of "qualified teachers for our poorer districts."

This title invites us to consider — (1), the fact that the educated classes are removed, or removing, from our large towns; (2), the difficulties which occur to Sunday Schools from this fact; and (3), the best means, under these circumstances, of obtaining a proper supply of qualified teachers for those who are thus deserted.

Now, in the first place, the fact is not doubtful. It cannot be denied that the wealthy and educated have a tendency to leave the crowded parts of our towns. This tendency has always existed. As families become affluent through commerce or manufactures, they naturally desire

* [See p. 24. This is a paper which was read in Liverpool, in October 1858, at a meeting called together for the purpose of discussing various subjects connected with Sunday Schools, and printed afterwards (December 1858) in the *Christian Observer*.]

to find a home in the country. The country has a charm for us all. The heathen poet says, that however forcibly by town pursuits you drive out the love of nature, it will still come back again and assert its rights. Rest from toil, pure air, green fields and flowers for our children — these things must be attractive, especially when a certain rise in the social scale has brought them within our reach.

But of late years this tendency has much increased, in consequence of the railways. It is possible now for the man of business to have his home far out in the country, and yet to attend daily to his occupations in the town. We see buildings continually in progress in the suburbs of our large centres of population, and far beyond the suburbs. There is, in fact, a kind of radiation going on, in consequence of which the higher elements of society move outwards, leaving the lower within. And the causes now at work in producing this effect seem likely to continue.

The evils which are inherent in this state of things are very serious. I do not doubt that there are inherent benefits also. If, for instance, some provision could be made for taking the homes of the poor into the country along with the homes of the rich, leaving the town a mere collection of workshops, warehouses, and market-places, the advantage would be great. Something of this kind was spoken of last week, at one of

our Social Science Meetings, in reference to the higher and better-paid of the working-classes. But, even in such a change as this, the dregs would be left behind. An intermediate section of the community being removed, the gulf would be still greater between the highest and the lowest. The evils that result from the gulf which exists, and which indeed seems likely to grow wider, demand our most careful consideration. In one place we see education, refinement, leisure, wealth; — in another we see the miserable population on which these influences ought to be brought to bear. In one place there is every facility for obtaining a clergyman of ability and zeal and popular talents, large collections are matters of course, the poor are in manageable numbers, the schools are easily supported, the Sunday School teachers are competent and abundant; — in the other place everything is unfavourable as to every one of these particulars.

The evils arising from this kind of separation are both direct and indirect. How great an injury it is to the higher classes, if they never see the poor, or come in contact with them! How little knowledge have some of those, who come to church in their carriages, of what the Sunday is elsewhere! They do not know what work is to be done, and what they themselves could do. Their sympathy is not excited; their latent zeal is not called into exercise.

On no religious and charitable work does this evil press more heavily than on the Sunday School. The workers are in one place, the work in another. The children to be taught are in the densest parts of the town; their natural Sunday teachers are in the country or its outskirts. The danger of the Sunday School system everywhere consists in its voluntary, desultory, incoherent character. In every case some element of strength is desirable, such as is imparted by the presence and cooperation of one or two, at least, of higher station and culture; for, as it has been well said in reference to this very subject, "Social rank "always tells, and gives natural weight of manner, "without assumption." The evil, indeed, may not be absolutely without some admixture of good. Great benefit is derived to the lowest classes from the gratuitous work of those who are immediately above them. Competent Christian teachers are sometimes raised up where there was little hope of finding them. In one poor district of this town, the Girls' Sunday School is maintained in efficiency in a great measure by a lady who walks to it from a considerable distance; and the Boys' School, by a well-instructed man of business, whose avocations require him to reside in the neighbourhood. But such instances, in the present organization of our parochial districts, are rare. Too often the work of giving spiritual instruction to children must be committed to

boys, who much need instruction themselves; or to well-disposed young women from shops and dress-making establishments, where the moral and religious atmosphere is not always the best. Sometimes teachers must be paid; or the schoolmasters and schoolmistresses of the Day Schools, instead of having rest on the Sunday, are then compelled to do some of their heaviest work. We may assume that, in all cases, the Clergyman is well acquainted with the teachers in the Sunday School, and personally trains and instructs them. But it is hard, if this is the most burdensome part of his parochial work. He ought, here at least, to have a staff to lean upon. Without this, he must be content with an inferior kind of teaching. With all his pains, his fabric must depend on his materials.

But let some of these hard-worked Clergymen speak for themselves. Two of my friends have sent to me letters on this subject. One of them, who has described the highest classes in his parish as an aristocracy of pawnbrokers, writes thus:—"I have tried young people who reside in the "immediate neighbourhood; but these I have "found deficient in qualification. Moreover, "owing to their being familiar with the scholars "during the week, they are unable to maintain "discipline on the Sunday. I have, therefore, "been obliged to obtain teachers from families "who live at a distance, but who attend my

"church. I regret, however, to add, that they "soon grow weary of the work, and plead that "walking to and from the church and schools "three times in one day is more than they can "manage." From the letter of another friend I extract the following:—"I am sorry to say "that we are sadly in want of teachers. This is "especially the case in the Boys' Sunday School. "Most of the teachers are themselves boys; and "I am obliged to set my own son, a lad of ten "years of age, to teach the youngest class. "Under these circumstances, it is no wonder if "the school is badly attended; and, as I have no "mixture of the better classes in my congrega-"tion, I do not know how this defect is to be "remedied."

We come now to the question of remedy. Is the evil incurable? Are we arrived at a crisis in our social history when we are obliged to gaze without hope at a difficulty which continually grows in magnitude? I would rather indulge the thought that the evil and the difficulty, when fairly looked at, are of such a kind as to suggest their own remedy. Social changes which involve great disadvantages in the process, are sometimes found to be positive benefits in the final adjustment.

It should be noted, that, as the evil in question is part of a wider evil, so the remedy is likely to be part of a general remedy. It has long been a

steady and growing conviction in my mind that the Church of England requires some supplementary organization, in addition to our present system of parishes and district churches, excellent and invaluable as that system is. We want in one place the help which is ready stored up in another place. As regards the help of money, this might be secured by a larger combination and more thorough fellow-feeling between our richer and poorer districts; by our large towns, in their pecuniary collections, being treated as wholes, instead of being broken into isolated unsympathizing parochial fragments. But money can do little for Sunday Schools. Nearly the whole of Sunday School teaching, and certainly the best of it, must be voluntary. Here, if anywhere, the living, human work is all-important. The problem, in fact, with reference both to Sunday Schools and every other part of the parochial machinery, is how to put the workers into the place when the work is ready — how to pour in this living stream of human labour into that which is a desert, because unwatered.

Now, I believe we lose a good deal by not attending to the hints of Scripture. A principle may often be involved in passages, which in the letter are not directly applicable to our case. We read of Phœbe, who was a deaconess in one of the seaports of Corinth. We read of the daughters of Philip as exercising something like an

official position at Cæsarea. In the First Epistle to Timothy, who was then in the large city of Ephesus, we find instructions concerning a certain distinctly recognized body of widows; nor is it certain that deaconesses are not there mentioned also. What if the germ is here of an organization which would supply the labourers required in the midst of our crowded and yet deserted neighbourhoods? *

Suppose that a clergyman had for his fellow-labourers in one of these districts, or even in some district immediately contiguous, half-a-dozen Christian women of education and experience, of mature age and settled character, living together for the simple purpose of doing good under his directions—how much more abundantly would he be enriched than by any sums of money, —how much might they gain by having a definite aim in life—how little would such an arrangement cost—with what great results might the money which has been wasted on almshouses have been laid out in this way!

Such a body of Christian women, resident on the spot, and officially appointed, would prosecute the district-visiting systematically, and as a matter of serious duty;—they would care for the

* [Rom. xvi. 1; Acts xxi. 9; 1 Tim. v. 9, 10, iii. 11. When this was written, I was not so confident, as I am now, of the meaning of the last of these passages, or so sensible of its importance.]

sick, and relieve the poor, and teach the young in Ragged and other Schools; and, what is most to the purpose here, they would constitute the strength and seriousness and solidity of the Sunday School. Men, who teach in the Boys' School, might come from a distance and return; women, who visit during the week, might possibly come and return. But the moving to and fro of lady-teachers on the Sunday would evidently be impracticable; and, if practicable, highly undesirable. Nor is it likely that teaching accomplished in this feverish way could be very efficient. Above all, I think stress ought to be laid on the local familiarity with the people around them, and the local interest in their appointed work, which would be attained by a body of resident deaconesses.

Details of organization must clearly be omitted here. Varieties of arrangement in different localities would involve no disadvantage. Women of limited means and moderate education might work under the direction of a lady-superintendent; or ladies, with or without riches, devoting themselves to the poor and the ignorant, might live in voluntary association; and again, younger women who have no domestic ties, might be intermixed with the older, and acquire experience, and learn to exercise their zeal with method. I have limited myself to the case of women, because here is the chief difficulty; and because, in

Sunday Schools, discreet women could control and teach the boys as well as the girls.

It is much to be regretted that when proposals of this kind have been discussed, they have too often been treated in a spirit of prejudice instead of a spirit of enquiry. It is well to forget what names have been given, or might be given, to such arrangements as those which I have ventured to suggest; and simply to consider whether they are Scriptural, prudent and sensible, and whether they are likely, in any degree, to meet the difficulty before us. There is no doubt that some of the circumstances which occurred in the Crimean war, and various books and essays which have been printed since, have tended to remove many misapprehensions with which the subject was previously clouded. I am quite aware that there are objections to the plan which I have advocated; but the practical question is, whether the advantages of such a plan would preponderate over its defects. To those who are disposed to lay chief stress upon objections, I would respectfully ask this question, — Have you yourselves any better plan to propose?

J. S. H.

October 1858.

APPENDIX II.

THE HELP OF WOMEN IN ENGLISH PARISHES.*

THE time seems to be come when a want in our Church System, which used to be unnoticed or only dimly perceived, is now very sensibly felt; and when, moreover, the want, so perceived and felt, is likely to be gradually supplied. The need of a more systematic female agency than any which we have yet possessed, is now a subject of general conversation. Nor is the question merely talked about as one of real importance; but it is already

* [This was published as a pamphlet in 1861, at the request of some friends, who wished to see a few practical remarks on the subject put together very briefly in a form adapted for general circulation. I take the liberty of adding the words which concluded the short preface prefixed to the second edition :—"In the pamphlet itself and in the notes "nothing has been altered. The writer has only to add, that "he has been much gratified and encouraged by observing "how favourably his argument has been received by the "*English Churchman* (June 13), the *Literary Churchman* "(July 16), the *Clerical Journal* (July 16), the *Record* (July "3 and August 19), the *Friend of the People* (July 20) and "the *Guardian* (September 4). Such agreement among "very various critics seems to show that nothing here ad-"vanced is fanatical or extravagant."]

put to the test of practical experiment. An improved organization of women's work is in progress in many places and under various modes. More, in fact, has been done in this way since 1850 than in the preceding half century. It becomes a matter of serious moment, that whatever is done in this direction should be well considered and wisely guided. Are we to check this new movement (for such it may truly be called), or are we to develope and regulate it? and what form ought it to take in the Church of England? Such questions as these deserve very careful answering.

The agency, to which attention is here invited, is what may be called, for want of a better term, *professional* female agency. Women set apart to charitable and religious work as the business of their lives are the agents to which allusion is made. A stated and continuous work, not in opposition to the admirable volunteer work, which is already abundant in good fruit, but in addition to that, and, as we shall see, strengthening and encouraging it, is now very generally felt to be desirable. The "Bible Woman" is the first and most obvious illustration.* She gives her whole time to her

* The great value of the *Missing Link* (Nisbet) is, that it represents not a theory but a fact, and that no one can accuse it of any association, direct or indirect, with Romanism. This book has done wonders in breaking down prejudice, and encouraging those who for years had been convinced of the importance of a systematic female Diaconate.

appointed occupation, as truly and as systematically as the "Scripture Reader." This, however, is to be carefully borne in mind—that the female ministers whom we want are not women of the lowest rank only, or of any one rank, but of all ranks, each in its suitable place, as Divine Providence and Divine Grace may give opportunity and impulse. The power of free adaptation is, in this case, peculiarly important. And this remark tends to exclude from our definition the Sisterhoods of the conventual type, which are not suited for free parochial working, as they are certainly not in harmony with the convictions and preferences of the English People. What is here spoken of is rather an "office" than an "order;" but still it is an office as opposed to desultory and fitful exertions.

There could be no harm in establishing such an agency, though no hint were given in Scripture of anything of the kind. If it has its basis in a true moral and spiritual want of the times, this is a sufficient justification. And some would prefer to argue the point on this ground alone. Yet it is not unimportant to notice that we can argue it on the ground of ancient precedent, as well as on that of modern necessity,—that the proposed solution of one of our pressing social problems is historically, as well as theoretically, right.

Some are of opinion that there is very little in the New Testament which has a practical bearing

on this subject. The writer of this paper takes a different view. And it seems to him that those who are acquainted with commentaries cannot fail to have noticed a progress in interpretation parallel with and equal to the progress which has taken place in the practical increase of female ministration.* Perhaps those who are predisposed towards the subject see too much in the Bible in favour of it; those whose predisposition is against it, too little. This difference of opinion is likely to promote very useful discussions.† Meanwhile, we may say without reproof that even the hints of Scripture arrest the attention of a devout and reverent mind; while it is cheerfully conceded that there is nothing in the Word of God to fetter and bind us here, but that we are left very free to make our arrangements according to the exigencies of the times.

But again, the Apostolic organization of the

* It is enough here to refer to Alford, Ellicott, and Wordsworth, and to such texts as Acts xvi. 14, 15, 40, xxi. 9; Rom. xvi. 1 and 6—15; Phil. iv. 2, 3; 1 Tim. v. 9; Tit. ii. 3; and especially 1 Tim. iii. 11, rightly understood, i. e. as referring to, not women in general, nor the wives of the deacons, but female deacons.

† Even in Germany, where the Deaconess idea has taken a strong hold of the Protestant mind, thoughtful men are by no means unanimous as to the degree in which the modern female Diaconate should be viewed as a reproduction of an Apostolical institution, or as a new organization arising out of present wants and allowed by Scripture.

Church cannot wisely be dissevered, in such reasonings, from that which immediately succeeded it. Such rude separation is not the habit of the Church of England. There is no doubt that deaconesses, or female deacons, did exist in primitive times side by side with those deacons of the other sex, who ministered in subordination to the regularly ordained clergy. And the very circumstances of the decay of this female Diaconate are such as to furnish an argument for its restoration in the same or a modified form, if, as seems most probable, it gave way before the growth of sacerdotal jealousy, and was extinguished or absorbed by the strictly-constituted Religious Orders.

If the decay of the primitive institution of Deaconesses may be used as an argument in favour of official female ministration in England, so may the renewal of the institution on the Continent, marked as it is by gradual growth, great success, increasing confidence, and, above all, by a truly religious spirit and by unequivocal Protestantism.* In England the popular idea of German Deaconesses is merely a vague notion of a single local institution at Kaiserswerth on the Rhine. But this institution itself, varied and extensive as it is,

* Here, it ought to be added, in modification of the preceding note, that the primitive idea, as well as the sense of existing need, seems to have been present throughout, and quite independently, in all the separate founders of Deaconess-Institutions.

is merely the parent stem of a vast number of offshoots, growing up and flourishing in various parts of Europe and even in Mahomedan countries.* And besides Kaiserswerth, and quite independent of it, there are about a score of different "Mother-Houses." Nor are these limited to Germany, but they are found in Switzerland, France, Holland and Sweden. Nor, again, are these establishments of one uniform and monotonous type. On the contrary, they present considerable varieties of organization and method.

In a short paper written with an exclusively practical aim, it seems desirable in the first place to bring definitely into view some of the arguments in favour of an agency of this kind, and then to make such suggestions as may be of some service towards its establishment. The questions which first arise are mainly these: What can a Woman do, in religious and charitable work, which a Man cannot do? And if there is a distinct field of female employment, why is it not enough that women should labour in it, while living at home in their families, and in conjunction with their domestic duties?

Now, in the first place, if the Woman's work in the cause of religious and social improvement were the same as the Man's work — if there were no distinct province of proper feminine ministration —

* The most recent English notice of this Institution is in *Good Words*, for February and March 1861.

it would still be an obvious truth that the woman may succeed where the man has failed, as, *vice versâ*, it is truth that the latter often succeeds where the former fails. It is not the mere doing of certain things, but the exercise of a beneficial influence, which is the point under consideration: and whatever may be said of the strong exertions of the rougher sex, it will hardly be contended that in persuasive influence the gentler sex is weaker than the other. Let it be remembered, too, that of all influences for good over the families of the poor, few are more likely to be useful than such as are exerted through the children. And then let the peculiar opportunities which female visitors have be considered. "Through a large portion of "the day the poor man's house is a woman's house "and a children's house." A woman will often be welcome there, when a man's presence would be an intrusion and a hindrance. Nor is this by any means the whole of the case. There is a law of contrast as well as a law of harmony in the mutual service of the two sexes. Women will often persuade men when men have failed to do so. The mission of woman to man is perhaps hardly yet fully understood amongst us; but it would be easy to give good illustrations of it from books which have recently been published.*

* Besides the books alluded to above (p. 8), another still more recent, entitled *Ploughing and Sowing* (Mozley), describes a remarkable work of the same kind in a different field.

Few thoughtful persons, however, will deny that women have a distinct field of their own, and that both in temporal and spiritual things. And this must be recollected also, that the spiritual opportunity grows out of the temporal. Of Christianly-minded women it is especially true that they are able, while caring for the body, to bring blessings to the soul. This may be briefly, but very emphatically, pointed out in four points of view.

(1.) In the case of nursing the sick, no man would venture to offer himself in competition, or to invade the woman's province. And how much does this province include! All feel their need of health. The nurse is always welcome to the sick. Few are sensible of their spiritual needs, especially in the time of prosperity. What an opportunity has the Christian nurse! She is present when others would be intruders. She stands "by the "well of water." She can watch for the moments when spiritual medicines are most fitly administered. And yet how utterly destitute are large masses of the population of such help at the times of need! Among the poor generally, mothers of families have no notion of doing what an educated woman with some experience of nursing would do as a matter of course. What a difference would it make, both in spiritual and temporal things, both in town and country,* if at times of

* I may again refer to what Southey said long ago of the

sickness a woman were always present, with a mind to understand medical directions, and a heart to use her opportunities for religious good! *

(2.) Another branch of strictly feminine work, not always so distinctly perceived as the other, but hardly less important, is connected with the watching over girls of the poorer ranks at the most critical and dangerous period of their lives, viz., when they are just going to service or just gone to service. From this source are recruited two very different classes of society — on the one hand, the most criminal and miserable, the most destructive of all that is involved in the word Home — on the other hand, one of the most useful of all classes, one that can contribute to an

sufferings of the poor in country districts during times of sickness, of the imperfect medical attention which is all they can obtain, and of the benefit which would arise from the distribution through our rural parishes of women at once "animated with religion" and trained to "recognize and "relieve the common kinds of illness."

* Miss Nightingale's *Notes on Nursing, for the Labouring Classes* (Harrison), in one sense an abridgement, in another an enlargement, of her fuller work, was just published when this pamphlet was going to press. This is not the place to do more than mention the system of training which is connected with her honoured name, and now begun at St. Thomas's Hospital. [For the operations at King's College Hospital, and at Middlesborough for the Devonshire Square Institution of Nursing Sisters, and the Liverpool Institution for the Training and Employment of Nurses, see above, pp. 128—132.]

untold extent towards the happiness of the higher ranks; and the results will greatly depend on the feminine influence which has been exerted at the point where the two paths diverge. Nor is this view limited to the case of those who are destined for domestic service. Female agency may surely be of the utmost value to the Clergyman, in regard to the majority of those girls among the poor, who are just confirmed or preparing for Confirmation. Here it is that the Protestant Deaconesses of the Continent find one of their most useful spheres of labour.* In addition to this general reference to parochial experience, it is enough here to mention our Workhouses, to indicate perhaps the greatest of all opportunities for feminine tact and perseverance on behalf of girls or young women.†

* Besides what relates to Servants' Schools and Servants' Homes, the work of the Deaconesses on Sundays among girls engaged in factories should especially be noticed. Here it is a pleasure to mention the "Preventive Branch" of the excellent "Bristol Female Mission." Its purpose is to rescue young girls under eighteen years of age before they are drawn into paths of vice. Besides definite arrangements for procuring them places, these girls have "a kind motherly "friend, who sees after them in their places." [An account of this Preventive Mission was given by Miss F. R. Cobbe at the Social Science Congress in Dublin. The substance has been printed under the title, *Friendless Girls and how to help them.* (Emily Faithfull & Co.)]

† Here must be particularly mentioned two new Institutions, one in the metropolis, the other in the country: the

(3.) A natural but painful transition takes us here to another part of the philanthropic field, where only women are likely to be successful. The truth is beginning to be more and more recognized, that "the lowest and most degraded "are only to be rescued by the purest and best and "most devoted of their sex." And the allusion here is, not to Penitentiaries and Prisons, though it is female service which is most useful to female inmates even of the latter, but rather to diffused work for the rescue of individuals, and especially on behalf of those who have left Penitentiaries and Prisons.* The Deaconess-Institutions of Kaiserswerth and Paris began with the sense of the need of some superintendence of discharged female criminals. The words of a devoted gaol-chaplain in England could here be quoted, who

Industrial Home for Young Women, in connection with the Workhouse Visiting Society, and the Brockham Home and Industrial Training School. An account of the former will be found in the *Journal of the Workhouse Visiting Society* (Longmans), No. xiii. May 1861 [and now the first Annual Report, No. xix. May 1862]. The characteristics of the latter are described in a little book entitled *The Workhouse Orphan* (Hatchard).

* The third Annual Report of the *Female Mission to the Fallen*, in connexion with the Reformatory and Refuge Union, is now published. [A recent book, entitled the *Omnipotence of Lovingkindness* (Nisbet), and describing some remarkable and very successful efforts in Glasgow, must be mentioned here; for it lets a bright ray of hope into a subject which we are apt to think full of despair.]

laments that his efforts constantly fail for want of some provision of this kind. And how weak those are who leave penitentiaries need not be stated. They are generally sent out with more fear than hope, and the fear is too often realised.

(4.) We come, in the last place, to the homes of the poor themselves. Here it seems quite enough to ask these three questions:—How are we to raise the degraded classes without raising their homes? how are we to raise the homes, unless we raise the mothers? and how are we to raise the mothers except by female agency? *

But it may be said—admitting all this, why should we not go on as we have gone on for the last fifty years? Why should this female agency be professional? Why is it not enough that it should be occasional, and in combination with home duties? Mrs. Hannah More said, "Charity "is the calling of a lady; the care of the poor is "her profession." Why will not this principle, carried practically into action, cover all our requirements?

The first answer to these questions is, that the principle is true only in a modified sense. With married ladies and with many unmarried ladies the home duties are primary; the duties to the poor are only secondary. If the two come into

* A well-known book, *Ragged Homes, and how to mend them* (Nisbet), has been mentioned above, p. 8, note.

collision, the latter must give way. Thus (assuming ladies in general to be practically sensible, which they are not, of both classes of duties) the former are, through natural causes, discharged continuously, the latter cannot be without some special provision for the purpose. Motherly and sisterly care cannot effectually be given to the miserable and degraded classes through the mere superfluity of time and sympathy which is at the disposal of the higher classes. No one, indeed, who knows anything of the manifold blessings arising from good District Visiting, will be so foolish as to speak lightly of them; but no one who has had experience of the best District Visiting is ignorant of its difficulties and deficiencies. To take an obvious illustration — a pestilential fever will often withdraw (and that as an imperative duty to others) all personal help at the time when it is most urgently needed. What is wanted at such times is a woman of religious character and competent education, whose duty is to be at that post. And at all times the value of skilled labour is not to be despised, even in the operations of that charity which springs from the heart.* We have long had trained schoolmistresses, and we

* It is sometimes said that charity, as coming from the heart, is independent of organization. Every Committee proves the contrary. One purpose, however, of this paper is to protest against our bondage to Committees and Secretaries, Reports and Appeals, Printing and Advertising.

are now beginning to have trained nurses: all that is here urged is that we should proceed further in the same direction.

These remarks would be true always, and in reference to all kinds of parishes; but in our own day the growth of large towns and manufacturing villages has brought about a separation of rich and poor, which threatens the most serious consequences unless some remedies are speedily and wisely applied. "The work is in one place, the "workers in another." The misery which invites the influence of Christian refinement and Christian sympathy is in crowded and dismal streets; the refinement is in green suburbs; and the sympathy, shut out from the misery, withers into unthinking indifference. Let this state of things be patiently considered in detail, and its evils must be seriously felt. The pursuits themselves of those towns and villages which we are describing may suggest an illustration of what one of the remedies ought to be.* What is usually done, when some obstacle needing the exertion of force is in one place, and when the motive power is in another place? Some intermediate machinery is introduced to bring the force into contact with, so as practically to bear upon, the difficulty. Such an intermediate machinery would be the establishment, throughout

* See Appendix I. for the consequences of this separation of rich and poor exhibited in one point of view.

our poor and populous parishes, of a systematic female Diaconate.

But a further argument in favour of the plan may be drawn from the present position of the clergy in reference to the laity. Thoughtful men in the Church are painfully aware of a growing disproportion of agency to work. The difficulty of obtaining curates is notorious. The reluctance to enter the sacred ministry seems greater than it used to be. To enquire into all the causes of this state of things would exceed the narrow limits which must here be strictly observed. There may be more conscientiousness than formerly — there may be more worldliness; the lucrative employments held out by business must certainly be attractive; the uneasy scruples of a sceptical age are probably operating in many minds. And such causes may be combined in various proportions. Even taking the last cause by itself, and assuming the prevalent scepticism to be very serious, it is worth observing that the quiet religious work of women has always been a powerful counteraction of the inroads of unbelief. But, putting this aside, it is certain that the pressure on the clergy is extreme. Their time for study is reduced to shreds. Manifold occupations, not strictly ministerial, are forced upon them.* The time seems to

* This position of the clergy is briefly but forcibly described in a recent number of the *Literary Churchman* (vol. vi. p. 451). The article was on the subject of Deaconesses.

be come when the clerical order needs a strong reinforcement of lay help; and no lay help is likely to be so precious and powerful as that of women. What kind of assistance from men would be most valuable cannot be discussed here; but it may be questioned whether any conceivable number of Curates, Scripture Readers, and Schoolmasters would really meet our wants so well as a copious supply and systematic distribution of female labourers.

Here it is assumed that this female labour is to be combined with all the rest of parochial machinery. In fact, throughout this paper it is distinctly contemplated as subsidiary to the Clergyman's work.* It will be conceded by all that these feminine ministrations must be definitely localised, if they are to be effectual. It may also be fairly contended that they are peculiarly adapted to the parochial system. A Deaconess is more likely to be stationary than a Deacon. Moreover, what the Clergyman wants is the systematic help of women in reference to his own sick parishioners, his own schools, and all the half-religious, half-secular details of his compli-

* No one will conclude, from the title or the contents of this pamphlet, that any doubt is implied of the singular value of professional female ministration in institutions as well as parishes. [See what is said on the newly-founded Deaconess-Institution in London (p.129, note), and also on Workhouses (p. 6).]

cated work.* Inharmonious agencies within the same territorial limits have a serious tendency to waste one another, to cause misunderstandings, and to give occasions for imposture. Nor do these principles imply any hostility to Dissenters.† The religious Dissenters are not hostile to the Church, even where they conscientiously differ from it. Many Nonconformists are such merely from habit, or because the Church has failed in its duty to them. In one neglected part of London a poor woman was asked by a female agent, the first spiritual messenger of the Church who had ever visited her, why she went to chapel: and her answer was, "I only want to go where I can be "told that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us "from all sin."

* The institution of the "Parochial Mission Women" in London must not be overlooked. The first report is noticed in the *Guardian* of February 20th, 1861, where it is said that "the scheme appears to contain the conditions of a "great success." [See pp. 137, 138.]

† Nor would it be right to omit a special mention of the efforts of Nonconformists in this matter of female ministry. The writer has now before him the excellent rules of the "Leeds Ladies' Household Mission" and an interesting report of the "Female Home Mission," in connexion with Great George Street Chapel, Liverpool. These Missions are on the "Bible-Woman" principle. So also is the "Liverpool Ladies' Bible and Domestic Mission," which began on a mixed basis, but seems now to have a tendency to combination with Church parochial work. Efforts in the same town on a distinctly parochial basis are mentioned above (p. 132, note).

Assuming that these views are reasonable, assuming that the want is real, and that the work of women is the proper means for supplying the want, the next practical question which arises is this — "What are we to do?" Probably the best answer to this is that we ought to do just what we are doing now, but with more definite views, with closer attention, and with more earnestness of purpose. Six simple suggestions occur to the writer as worthy of especial notice.

(1.) A serious and calm *attention* ought to be given to the subject. Every clergyman is bound to consider it candidly — to be willing to learn what may be suggested concerning it from any quarter — to look at it well from all sides. Some watchfulness is required here against the unworthy motives to which even good men are exposed in the midst of their useful work. Perhaps there is no question in connexion with which it is more necessary to deprecate that hostility which arises from the impression of novelty, or from vague suspicion, or from the habit of controversy. The subject is really too serious for what Dean Milner used to call "nibbling altercation." That prejudices should subside immediately is not to be expected, not even to be wished. But those who are not convinced should be slow to hinder those who are. Some persons are under a great temptation to oppose what they themselves are not prepared to carry into effect.

(2.) But again, among those who are prepared to move in this direction, there ought to be great *forbearance* with one another. There may be various modes of doing the same thing, and this very variety may be expected to result in greater store of experience. This is peculiarly a subject with regard to which those who agree in principle may differ in detail. To say that a poor woman cannot work effectually among the poor would be a mischievous mistake. To say that none but the poor can work effectually among the poor would be a mistake still more mischievous. Some would lay chief stress on institutions for training female agents; others would entirely dispense with them. What arrangements are best for the religious life of these ministering women, what rules and regulations for the direction of their work, what scale and mode of payment, are questions admitting of great variety of opinion. Again, the precise method of the clergyman's superintendence is not a matter that can be immediately settled to the satisfaction of all. This, indeed, may probably be said with confidence (and it is the more important to say it after what has been urged above concerning parochial organization)—that if it is hardly proper for superintending ladies (in the Church of England) to conduct female missions without some cooperation with the clergyman, it is unwise in any clergyman to undertake such superintendence without availing himself of the

help of those ladies whose experience and tact can be laid under contribution.

(3.) But careful reflection will show that, in order to secure success, certain things must be carefully avoided. *Prudence* is quite as necessary as forbearance. Needlessly to offend prejudices is inexcusable; and such needless offence may be given by undue stress on peculiar forms, on peculiar phraseology, on costume, or mere outward rules. Prejudices may seem to us very foolish, may make us very impatient: but it is better to succeed in an enterprise at a point below our ideal, than to shipwreck a good cause on an obstinate resistance.

(4.) Again, though this is not a matter admitting of procrastination, it does require *patience*. In an enterprise of this kind many questions are raised which can only be settled by experience. A practical problem must be solved by practice. We must begin experimentally, and be guided by the results. A system of English Deaconess-work, if it is to live, must grow like a tree, not be artificially built on an arbitrary plan. Moreover, it must be indigenous, not exotic. Our business is not to copy, but to learn. What has succeeded elsewhere will not necessarily succeed here in the same form. The success of transplanting a full-grown tree is always precarious.

(5.) At the same time, without *experiment* there can be no patience. To wait till our theory

is perfect, is to wait till the sufferings of the poor have deepened into utter misery, and till successive streams of sinners have flowed into eternity. Patience without enthusiasm does not deserve the name of faith. The true course is to begin to do a little imperfectly, that we may learn how to do much and to do it more perfectly. We must not expect to accomplish at first what is ultimately found to be the best. It is one thing to reach an ideal, and another to make a practical and useful beginning.

(6.) One thing more seems to be very needful, viz., that much *conference* should take place among those who are really in earnest on this question. The interchange of thought on a subject involving so many details would be peculiarly serviceable, both in promoting sympathy and preventing mistakes. The interchange of experience would be of still greater service. Each town, each parish, could learn much from other towns and other parishes.* Few things perhaps would be more useful than a collection of instances in

* While these pages were passing through the press, communications were received from the populous part of Staffordshire and from a rural district in Wiltshire. Of the former, it was observed that the poor are remarkably kind in nursing one another during sickness, while the influence of educated gentlewomen is utterly absent; of the latter, that the District Visitors are very efficient, but that Nursing Sisters are much needed. Such contrasts are full of instruction.

which the experiment of official female agency has been tried, with the history not only of success but of failure.

If such a course of proceedings is pursued among us in a Christian spirit, our progress may be expected to be as follows:—Here and there, in this parish and that, clergymen will be deeply impressed with the need of official female ministration. On the other hand, women of various ranks will be found, in many places, who long thus to minister. The former will seek for such women to serve with them as in disposition or social grade seem most nearly to meet their requirements; the latter will be drawn to those parishes where they discover a real sympathy with their aspirations. A lady (perhaps a clergyman's widow or orphan daughter) will take a cottage and pursue the pursue the work in which she has already had some experience. Those who have had less experience will seek for practical teaching under those who are already at work. Perhaps two or three such ministering women may combine in some residence well chosen for Christian efforts among the poor.* Perhaps a gentlewoman

* See what is said by the author of *My Life, and what am I to do with It?* (Longmans) on ladies choosing their abode (when they are free to choose it) with a view to usefulness rather than to pleasant society, good shops, and the like, p. 60. In a review of this book in the *Record* (November 23, 1860), it is truly said that the "stern realities of

of high education and devoted character may superintend some of her sisters, more lowly but not less devoted than herself. The circumstances are very various under which "Homes" may be established, where resident "Lady Missionaries" or "Lady Superintendents" may supply a centre for a wide circle of operations.* Many of these experiments may be temporary at first; and some will fail; but some will succeed. The consequences are not doubtful. Opportunities for usefulness will multiply. The sewing-school, the sick-room, the mothers' meeting, the provident society, will all be found occasions for spiritual

"life call forth the latent tenderness and tact which dis-
"tinguish the gentler sex."

* The writer has wished, throughout this paper, to illustrate his positions, so far as he could, by actual examples. Two recent London circulars enable him to do this here: one issued by the "United Association for the Christian and Domestic Improvement of Young Women," under the presidency of Lord Shaftesbury; the other describing a plan for "District Visiting in Shoreditch," set on foot by Mr. H. Kingscote and others. The former contemplates the establishment of "Homes," in each of which a "Lady Missionary" is to reside, aided and directed by Volunteer Ladies. One feature of the latter is to place five or six ladies, without salary, in a small house, under a "Lady Superintendent." It may be laid down as a rule, that in the arrangement of systematic female ministration a central house or room is important. This is a marked characteristic of the continental Deaconess work. [For steps in the further advance of these operations, reference may be made to the *Record* for June 14, 1961, and April 25, 1862.]

benefit. Hearts will be touched that were hardened before. Gratitude for miserable homes made happy will prepare the way for higher blessings. Attendance on Divine Worship, the study of Scripture, the practice of Family Prayer, will increase. Each such case of successful ministration will be an example and an encouragement. Correspondence will spring up between one parish and another, and experience will grow.*

Thus scattered attempts will ripen slowly into a system. Those who were timid before will take courage from what has succeeded. The more impetuous will be taught sobriety by difficulties and disappointments. Party-spirit will be diminished, suspicions will be allayed, in the presence of whatever good has been accomplished. Moreover, the true relation will be discovered between the practical work of the Deaconess and the institution for training Deaconesses. Those who have begun with establishing Institutions† will be all the wiser for knowing the practical needs of parishes. Those who are engaged in the scattered fields of parochial labour will perhaps begin to

* These details are not imaginary, but suggested by practical observation and inquiry. One source of information is a successful experiment, on a strictly parochial basis, in connexion with St. John's Church, Liverpool; nor is this the only one in the same town.

† Some Institutions for training female agents, and for giving a centre to scattered operations, are described above, p. 128, note.

feel the need of training. How is that medical knowledge to be had which is so important an accessory to a woman's spiritual work? This question is only a specimen of many. The experience which suggests the questions will probably by degrees find the answers.

In proportion as all this is realised, many good results may be expected over and above those which have already been indicated. One great result is this—that a parish with a Deaconess has always a certain amount of district visiting which is not liable to interruption. The Clergyman has some feminine help on which he can rely. This help, too, is practised help. Moreover, it is not only substantial aid in itself, but it is a fixed centre, which gives strength and definite organization to the looser operations of those volunteers who are not officially responsible.

And here already is indicated another result of the utmost value. The official work will bring out voluntary work that did not exist before, and give new life and encouragement to that which did exist. Some have an impression that the contrary result would follow—that official labours would paralyze and replace the voluntary. This would indeed be a disastrous change. But theoretically this is very improbable, and all experience tends the other way.* Good work in

* The recent work of the Bible-Women in London and elsewhere has brought out into activity many volunteers

progress attracts, not repels, those who are in sympathy with it. A clergyman fixed in a parish does not diminish voluntary exertion, but developes it, and all the more in proportion as he labours locally and pastorally. The stated work both stimulates and organizes the other. This is still more likely to be the case with women's work: for a woman is a centre of sympathy more than a man can ever be. The Deaconess would draw into the habit of self-denying exertion many ladies, who hitherto have only acted occasionally, or wished to know how to begin. Good intentions are abundant; but method and encouragement are wanting. A fixed system of well-considered female agency would bring down this misty atmosphere of good intentions in showers of blessing on all our parishes.

This, too, is to be very particularly noticed—that a system of this kind gives a place of work to the timid and retiring, as well as to the more daring and energetic. It is sometimes said that the philanthropic exertions of women, if they are worth anything, must be the result of spontaneous

who did little or nothing before, and to those who laboured willingly it has given new interest in the poor, and new knowledge of their sufferings and trials and of the best modes of doing them good. Similar has been the much longer and more varied experience in Switzerland and Germany. Deaconess-work, well established, always gathers round it an energetic committee of cheerful lady-helpers.

enterprise. This might be partially true, if it were impossible to add an official element to the voluntary. But by this addition we provide opportunities and facilities to those who follow as well as for those who originate; and the women who work most happily under guidance are perhaps by no means the least useful.

Here too is a partial answer to the objection which is often made, that, though the plan be good, the right women will never be found. It is hardly likely that the best of our women will be very forward to take a new position, till that position has been recognized by public opinion. But let the occupation of this Diaconate become so far customary as to be sheltered from criticism, and let support throughout life be guaranteed to those who are destitute of pecuniary means—and candidates will not be wanting. It ought not to be forgotten that there is an industrial side to this question. In 1851 the adult women in England were half a million in excess of the adults of the other sex. Has God made a mistake in the law of population, or do we make a mistake in not acting on the hint which He gives us? Some foolish things have perhaps been said concerning the competition of male and female labour. Still it is true that new vocations, directly or indirectly remunerated, are much needed for many of our women;* and in regard to the occupation here

* Among many other Essays on this subject, we may

described, there can be no feminine intrusion into the other sphere. No doubt only a limited number of women are fit for this occupation. But suppose one-fiftieth part of the half-million were seriously engaged in it. How great would be the gain of our parishes, and how many would have found a life full of usefulness and happiness!

What has just been said must be emphatically repeated. It is not every woman who is fit for this kind of service. It is the service of Him who gave Himself for us, and who came that He might serve. It is service, for His sake, on behalf of the meanest and most sinful. It is only in devotion to Him that such service can be found. The first deaconesses were at the foot of the Cross.*

May 1861.

refer especially to the *Edinburgh Review* for April 1859, and to articles in the *Times* of November 1st and November 2nd, 1860. [See Preface.]

* Matt. xxvii. 55, 56; Mark xv. 40, 41; see Luke viii. 3. The same Greek word is used in Matt. viii. 15, xx. 26—28; Mark ix. 35. It would be interesting and instructive to trace the usage of this word carefully through the New Testament. See, for instance, Rom. xv. 31; Cor. ix. 12. In the English Version the words "minister," "servant," "service," hide some things which are expressive in the original.

APPENDIX III.

THE PROTESTANT DEACONESS-INSTITUTION IN PARIS.*

SIR, — I wish, with your permission, to offer to your readers, at irregular intervals, a few letters on a subject concerning which I was allowed to write in the *Christian Observer* in the last month of 1858. The title of that contribution † was "Sunday Schools and Deaconesses;" but it was remarked, in the course of it, that a paper with that special reference could only touch a part of a very wide subject. Since that time, the question of the female Diaconate has made wonderful progress, both in public opinion and in actual experiment. The "Bible-Woman" system has been established. The *Missing Link* has been published. And these, important as they are, are only specimens. Hospitals, workhouses, penitentiaries, and, above all, parishes, are feeling the impulse. The subject in all its range is under grave discussion. Contributions based on actual knowledge and careful thought can hardly fail to be of some use, even if they are desultory and occasional.

* [A letter printed (September 1861) in the *Christian Observer*, See pp. 112, 124.]

† [Appendix I.]

There are various reasons why the consideration of the Paris Deaconess-Institution is an advantageous starting point. In the first place, its history is not very generally known.* When Deaconess-Institutions have been under consideration in England, our attention has been taken up with that of Kaiserswerth, not more than its importance deserves, but too much to the exclusion of others. I lay more stress, however, on this, that the Paris Institution has on the whole been the least successful of the Continental foundations of the same kind. It has, therefore, a special value controversially, on the principle that it is good policy in argument to understate your case. Moreover, the difficulties which have beset it are peculiarly instructive. It has struggled into existence through much debate, and in the course of this debate

* Among the scattered notices which have appeared at various times, we may particularly mention an appeal (inserted in the *Record* newspaper, and elsewhere, in 1850) for the formation of a body of English Deaconesses in association with the Paris Institution, and specially with the view of rescuing English women in Paris from a life of misery and sin. The author of the appeal was Mr. E. A. Argent, for several years a successful agent of the Colonial Church and School Society. [When this was written, I did not know that a short notice of this Institution had appeared in the *Christian Observer* in the very year (1858) in which the above-mentioned paper was inserted. Nor was I aware (unless I had forgotten) that it was described very fully in the *Edinburgh Review* for April 1848. That article anticipated much which is now accepted by public opinion.]

those points have come prominently into view which are likely to be most closely scrutinised in England. Our own people are naturally anxious to be fully informed of all the religious bearings of an organization which is pressed on their notice. The Paris Deaconess-Institution, though much smaller and weaker than some others, is, in this point of view, very rich in suggestions.

The first beginnings of a new religious enterprise are of great importance. We want to be satisfied concerning the spirit in which it has risen. Our first criticism is directed to this point. Our wish is to discover here the traces, so far as it is permitted, not only of human sagacity and human courage, but of Divine Providence and Divine Grace. I doubt whether any spiritual enterprises of our times will stand this test better than the founding of Deaconess-Institutions. I am well satisfied of this as regards the Institution in Paris.

As a mere matter of chronology, the idea of a female Diaconate was probably quite as early with M. Vermeil as with Dr. Fliedner of Kaiserswerth, or any other of the founders of the various Deaconess-Institutions. He thought and spoke about the subject in 1830, or before. At that time he was pastor of a congregation in Bordeaux. It is of some interest to mention this; for it was from that congregation that the lady came, who was of eminent service in organizing the Institution in Paris, and who still presides there. The first steps of

the undertaking were marked by those providential coincidences, on which a religious mind loves to dwell. This is not the place for such private histories, however important they are for a complete criticism of undertakings of this kind. Suffice it to say, that about 1840, M. Vermeil, who had then removed to Paris, was urgently impressed with the need of giving a definite organization to female charity, especially with the view of aiding and guiding women who had been in prison. While at Bordeaux, Mdlle. Malvesin had long been desiring "to devote herself entirely to some work "of this kind;" and about this time the desire ripened, under the influence of a deep sorrow, into a strong conviction and resolution. "But the "path was not clear. She wrote for counsel to "M. Vermeil on the same day when he wrote to "invite her to Paris." Thus, at the point of intersection of two Christian biographies, grew up this admirable Institution.

The work began with a difficulty which will probably be felt in England whenever any similar attempt is made. This difficulty will be apprehended more clearly, if we contrast the first steps of the Institution in Paris with the first of that in Strasburg.* There M. Härter, the founder, after a long parochial experience, found the Deaconess spirit rising among those who had been his own

* [See above, pp. 87, 88.]

catechumens. Thus he began with a number of fit agents, gradually trained by himself from youth, and ready to act under others in a spirit of affectionate obedience. Here, on the other hand, it was difficult for Mdlle. Malvesin to counsel and control those who were admitted at once as "Sis-"ters" without any preliminary probation. It was always intended, however, at Paris, to have a "pre-"paratory school" for Deaconesses; and this intention is now, after many hindrances, realised. This *Ecole Préparatoire* is in fact the Institution itself, each department furnishing its opportunities of instruction to those who wish to be Deaconesses; the Hospital being one class, the Penitentiary another, the Infant School a third. This threefold instruction corresponds with the threefold division of the work itself, which embraces in separate divisions the cure of the sick, the rescue of the guilty, and the teaching of the young. Under the second head we must include, besides the Penitentiary for voluntary inmates, and the Reformatory School for young girls who are placed there by authority of the law, a *Retenue,* just now in process of establishment, for those intermediate cases to which the steady but gentle influence of a female Diaconate seems peculiarly applicable.

As regards the Penitentiary, I was strongly convinced there, as I had been elsewhere, of the value of a system under which Christian women give their lives to the work, and reside day and

night among those whom they wish to save — as opposed to our English method of committees and matrons. Of all statistics, those connected with this subject demand a very cautious reserve. Some who give admirable promise, are presently discovered to be utterly fallen once more. Some who have left the temporary home in a furious outburst of passion, are found, after many years, to have traced a sincere repentance to the influence which they seemed to reject. I cannot, however, help noticing the encouraging statement, that, of the inmates of this Paris Institution, two-thirds are known to have been brought to an orderly and respectable life, and half of these two-thirds to have given proofs of a thorough religious conversion.

I have said that this enterprise, in its progress, has passed through considerable difficulties. This, in fact, is the one single Deaconess-Institution, among several that I have visited, upon which a slight shade of sadness seems to rest, in contrast with the buoyant elasticity and sustained strength which is conspicuous in all the others. Here only does there appear to be any embarrassment as regards funds. M. Vermeil's health has suffered seriously during the last few years. The number of Deaconesses, too, in the parent-house, is very small.* Nor are any extended operations carried on beyond the limits of the parent-house. Here

* [See, however, note at the end.]

is a great contrast with Kaiserswerth, which has a multitude of out-stations. And further, no great impression seems to have been produced by the Paris work on the general body of French Protestants, whether belonging to the Confession of Augsburg, or to those who are technically called "Reformed." In the East of France, where the former or "Lutheran" tendency prevails, the Deaconess-Institution of Strasburg has struck its roots both deeply and widely. Among the "Re-"formed" Swiss, in Calvin's adopted country, Saint-Loup has the sanction of public opinion. Such is not the case with France generally (of course I mean France so far as it is Protestant), with regard to the Paris Institution. For this it is not difficult to assign the reasons. The atmosphere of French Protestantism is, on the whole, both cold and light. With much love of independence and much dislike of authority, there is a great lack of the seriousness of spirit, and of the habits of simple earnest piety, which characterize many families in Germany and Switzerland. Thus, in France, women offer themselves very sparingly for the work of Deaconesses. Even those pastors who are favourable to the principle of the work, are very faint in their encouragement. And many are unfavourable to the principle. And besides the theoretical division of French Protestants into Lutheran and Reformed, we must remember that there is a wide prevalence of

opinions which in England we should regard as far from orthodox; and by the divines of the free school, the establishment of Deaconesses seems never to have been viewed with favour. To all these influences we must add the discouragement given by the State to Protestants, except where they are strong and numerous, and the determined opposition which the Roman Catholics have made to an enterprise which not only is conducted on evangelical principles, but has likewise an obvious tendency to win the affections of the poor.

It is well, as I have said, for an advocate of the Deaconess cause thus frankly to mention the weak side of what has been established by M. Vermeil and Mdlle. Malvesin in Paris, if it were only for the sake of averting the charge of overcolouring his picture. But there is this further advantage in studying the history of the struggles of the Paris Institution, that we have in it an accumulation of much useful experience, and a record of important controversies, by attending to which we may hope in England to avoid the like. Perhaps the dullest of all printed books are the Annual Reports of benevolent societies; but the successive Reports of the Institution before us are full of valuable suggestions for those who wish to begin similar operations here. It is interesting to trace the stages of progress through difficulties, and the gaining of new positions after conflict; to observe how objections, which are likely to be made again,

have been refuted already, and how a wide range of experience has been gradually obtained. In these papers we see the statutes as they have been revised on various occasions. Though the work has always been in principle the same, yet since the time when the first pamphlet was published in 1841, with the title *Etablissement des Sœurs de Charité Protestantes en France,* various modifications have been introduced in detail.* Speaking generally, this institution is "of the "less severe and less ecclesiastical type, like "those, for instance, of Riehen and Saint-Loup, "as contrasted with those of Kaiserswerth and "Strasburg."†

As regards this feature, it may be interesting to notice how the establishment struck one of our best known and most deservedly respected Anglican theologians. Some few years ago the attention of Dr. Wordsworth was attracted to these Deaconesses of Paris, and in his journal we find the following passage. "Went to the Barrière "of Charenton, near which is a recently esta-"blished (viz. in 1842) Institution for *Diaconesses* "*des Eglises Evangéliques de France,* as they

* The adoption, after mature consideration, of the term *Diaconesse* instead of *Sœur de Charité Protestante,* is instructive.

† Thus, to mention a very small point, the Sisters have the option whether they will retain their baptismal or family names, and we find both in the printed list.

" term themselves, or *Sœurs de Charité Pro-*
" *testantes.* We were very kindly received by
" Mdlle. Malvesin, the Sœur Supérieure, who is a
" very pleasing and affable person, and very sim-
" ple in her manners and address. The costume
" of these Sisters is certainly a great improvement
" on that of their namesakes the elder *Sœurs de*
" *Charité*, without being very different from it.
" This Institution differs in principle from the
" Society of the Romish Communion in the fol-
" lowing respects. First, there are no *vows*, but
" only simple engagements for not more than two
" years, which may be dissolved for good reasons,
" with the permission of the governing body.
" *Point de séclusion* is another circumstance in
" which these Sisters state that they differ from
" the Romish sisterhood. It is certain that the
" conductors of this establishment desire to make
" it a religious one; the walls are inscribed with
" numerous Scripture texts; there are Bibles in
" all the rooms of the Sisters; and there is a
" Chapel in the building where they assemble for
" prayer, singing psalms, reading and exposition
" of Scripture, morning and evening daily. But
" here comes out an unhappy want of *principle*,
" a defect which is at the root of the system.
" The Institution is under the control jointly of
" the *two* different Protestant communions recog-
" nized and paid by the State in France, viz., the
" Reformed or Calvinistic, and the Lutheran or

"Confession of Augsburg; hence it has, and can "have, *no common creed* and no *basis of unity.* "The chapel *has* a *pulpit,* but no *altar.* The "daily expositions of Holy Scripture in the chapel "are given by the *Sœur Supérieure,* or by one of "the other *Sœurs* deputed by her for the occa-"sion, and are delivered extempore. This Society "claims, in the official prospectus of its constitu-"tion, to have no other basis than the *Gospel* (*de "ne pas avoir pour base que l'Evangile*); but it "is difficult to see how the members of the Sister-"hood can, consistently with this assertion, take "upon themselves the title of *Deaconesses* without "any due mission; and how can they reconcile "their profession of a *Scriptural* foundation with "their daily practice of *expounding Scripture,* "when they meet in the Book which they expound "with the prohibition which suffers them 'not to "'teach?'"*

Without touching upon the general ecclesiastical questions raised here, I will venture to make a comment on just three points in Dr. Wordsworth's criticism. It is hardly correct to say that the Institution is under the joint government of the two Protestant communions. Doubtless it receives sympathy, and a certain amount of co-operation, from members of both, though the "Reformed" are predominant in Paris, as the

* *Diary in France, mainly on Topics concerning Education and the Church.* London 1845; pp. 171—173.

"Lutherans" are at Strasburg; but the establishment is really a private one, under the management of those who founded it. As to the exposition of Scripture by the Sisters, I think this can hardly be blamed without unduly pressing the letter of Scripture. I doubt whether the Deaconesses ever pass beyond the feminine sphere as defined by the Apostle. A very significant expression, used to me by M. Vermeil regarding the idea of the office was this, that though they could not be "ministres de la parole," they might be "ministres de l'action." And this point is closely connected with what is noticed of the peculiarities of the chapel. In order to avoid all ecclesiastical complications, it was fixed that the chapel should not be used for the celebration of the sacraments, but only for the ordinary devotions of the house. This question, in all its bearings, is discussed in a very important controversy between M. Vermeil and M. Coquerel, published in the Sixth Report of the Institution. But that controversy enters also on other questions of no slight consequence, and I believe it will be useful if I give some extracts. M. Coquerel is well known as an eloquent preacher, and as a leader in the free school of French Protestant theologians. He is not perhaps a Unitarian, but he is what we should call, in England, an Arian or semi-Arian. It is from this side of French Protestantism that the opposition to the Deaconess-organization seems

chiefly to have come. M. Coquerel wrote warmly against it, and M. Vermeil replied firmly. The former, referring to the published regulations, laid down certain conditions under which alone he could approve the new Institution. We give in order two of these requirements, with the explanations.

"1. *No obedience.*—In the regulations I find "the following passage: *The supreme authority* "*is placed in the hands of the superintending* "*Sister; her duty is to see that rules are ob-* "*served; and to her obedience is due.* Now "this is the primary article of all monastic foun- "dations; this is pure Romanism; charity thus "contrived is not charity, but servitude; and all "the more because a Deaconess cannot quit the "Institution except after a notice of six months. "These are not Gospel principles, for the Gospel "of Jesus Christ is *the perfect law of liberty.* "(James i. 25.)

"2. *No vows or engagements.*—The Deacon- "esses, say the statutes, make no vows; they take "engagements. But let us avoid here all illusion "of words. If these religious engagements en- "gage, then they are vows; and religious vows "are an importation from Paganism or Mosaism "into Christianity. Our fathers abolished them "throughout Reformed Christendom, judging "them contrary to the spirit of the Gospel. "Calvin says that true disciples ought not have

"their conscience bound. (See his *Commentary* "*on Acts*, xxi. 23.) On this point I am a Cal-"vinist. But it is too true that, in establishing a "monastic servitude, it was necessary to forge "chains; and the only possible chains are reli-"gious vows. You determined to have obedience, "and you insisted on its being promised before "God. This is perfectly logical." (COQUEREL, pp. 4, 5.)

"1. '*No obedience.*'—I agree with you as "regards claustral, blind, monastic obedience, "where those who obey are perfectly passive, and "give up both conscience and will into the hands "of a superior. . . . . But there are two kinds "of obedience. No doubt we require obedience. "But where is it not required? when can it be "dispensed with? Without obedience there can "be no subordination; then what becomes of the "family, of society, of the church? No associa-"tion, no organization, no combined work is any "longer possible; everything is broken up and "crumbles away. But while speaking thus, I do "not forget what truth and charity, evangelical "liberty, and human dignity really demand. "They demand—(1) that the obedience be free, "reasonable, and conscientious; (2) that in this "obedience the law be supreme over her who "commands as well as her who obeys; (3) that "it be possible to withdraw from the obedience. "And these are our principles.

"2. '*No vows or engagements.*'—You allege "that the engagements taken by the Deaconesses "are anti-Christian vows. But the difference is "immense between the vow and the engagement. "The latter is, in fact, simply like that which "takes place in ordinary life, as in the case of "servants, teachers, apprentices, &c. As in those "instances, so in this: there is a term at which "the engagements can be renewed or broken. . . ". . . They are taken freely, not as before God "or in His name, but simply with regard to an "administration which receives the Deaconesses "on their own application, instructs them during "eighteen months at least, supplies them with the "means of support, tends them in their sicknesses, "and assures them of a home in old age. It is "expressly stated, also, that the engagement can "be broken, not only 'for urgent reasons,' but "'by mutual agreement,' seeing that 'the work "'claims no devotion but that which is willingly "'rendered.' If we ought to avoid illusions of "words, surely we ought to avoid confusion of "ideas." (VERMEIL, pp. 12—16.)

In the same report a further answer is given to M. Coquerel by another writer:—"*No obedience,* "you say; but observing rules which you know "beforehand, is no servitude. Following the "direction of the person who is judged most "capable, is not servitude. . . . . If the law of "Christ is *perfect liberty,* the bond of marriage is

"contrary to that law." And then he adds: "*No* "*obedience* is equivalent to anarchy. What is any "administration, without some chief to give direc- "tion and impulse? A body without a head or a "mind is a corpse."*

I add no comment on these extracts. These are questions which must be considered by those who contemplate the establishment of any analogous institutions in England; and I think it is not without advantage to present the controversy exactly as it has already occurred in France.

I will only say, in conclusion, concerning this Paris Deaconess-Institution, that it would be quite a mistake to conclude, from the preceding remarks, that it is a failure. If it was good policy to begin a series of papers on the Female Diaconate by understanding my argument, it is due to the cause which is advocated to leave the reader in no doubt as to the success of this practical illustration of it. No doubt the Paris Institution has still to contend with difficulties. It is in a less favourable position now, with regard to Government, than when the late Duchess of Orléans could extend to it a powerful help. But even in public recognition it has been gaining ground of late. The municipality of Paris received so favourable a report of the establishment, from a commission appointed to examine it, that it has pledged itself

* Pages 30, 31, from *l'Echo de la Reforme.*

to a large annual contribution; and within the last two years it has received from the central government that public authorization which is only given to philanthropic institutions of acknowledged utility.* As regards internal statistics, whereas in 1854 there were only fourteen Deaconesses, there are now twenty-one, exclusive of probationers.† As regards the successful maintenance of a principle under discouragements, this Paris Institution is peculiarly valuable and important. It is a firm outpost in an enemy's country. Its very struggles make it a most instructive sample of a system, which is growing and spreading, and which, in fact, has so grown and spread as to have become a feature of the best Continental Protestantism.—Your obedient servant, J. S. H.

August 1861.

* [See above, page 89, on the similar recognition, at an earlier period, of the Deaconess-Institution at Strasburg.]

† There has been an increase also in the out-stations. One Deaconess conducts a home for convalescents at Passy; one is at Rouen. Six, in all, are now labouring beyond the limits of the parent-house. [The Report of April 1861 exhibits a still further growth. The Deaconesses were then twenty-six; and the Probationers had risen in the preceding three months from ten to fifteen. The out-stations, too, had further increased, and then occupied ten Deaconesses.]

APPENDIX IV.

DEACONESSES OF THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH, AS EXHIBITED IN THE APOSTOLICAL CONSTITUTIONS.*

SIR,—In the discussions respecting the Female Diaconate which have arisen in England, and which, I hope, are likely to continue till this Diaconate is established among us in a wise and practical form, some thought has naturally been given to the Deaconesses of the Early Church.

It does not indeed follow, that if we are to have an authorized ministration of women as a part of our ecclesiastical system, it must necessarily be the restoration of something in the ecclesiastical system of the first three or four centuries. Such a ministry might be suggested by the circumstances of our times, and fully justified by Scripture, without having anything exactly corresponding with it in primitive times.

The converse distinction, on the other hand, also must be borne in mind. The Scriptural aspect of this question, and its early ecclesiastical aspect, are two different subjects. It is quite con-

* [A letter printed (March 1862) in the *Christian Observer*. See p. 38 and Preface.]

ceivable that we might find a system prevailing in the first three or four centuries of such a character as, when compared with the New Testament, evidently to jar and clash with the Inspired Writings. In such a case, to restore what is early, would not be to establish what is Apostolical.

These two cautions cannot be too carefully remembered. But the remembrance of them does not make us feel it at all less desirable to study the question of that Diaconate of women which existed in the early ages. Before we can even discuss the question of restoring primitive Deaconesses, we must know what those Deaconesses were. We must also endeavour to distinguish between what was essential and what was accidental in their office. Thus only shall we be able to determine whether the circumstances of our times are such as to demand or suggest the restoration of the ancient system.

Feeling the importance of this inquiry, I have made it my business, with such leisure as I could command, to prosecute it independently, not simply reading what others have compiled, but examining the original sources. And I shall be glad if you can find room for some of the results.

As to the original sources of information themselves, they are very widely scattered over a large range of writings extending through several centuries. We find incidental notices of Deaconesses in commentaries, in treatises, in histories, in the

decrees of Councils, in the enactments of both the Civil and Canon Law, and even in heathen writers. It may be doubted whether these notices have ever been collected, examined, and criticised as carefully and closely as the subjcct deserves. It must indeed be acknowledged that Ziegler* among the Germans, and our own Bingham,† have written concerning it with much learning and discrimination. Nor ought the Dutch Suicer ‡ to be forgotton, who in a shorter compass has given an excellent summary of the chief facts of the case. But still these, and all other writers on the subject, have left something to be desired. One source of information—the so-called Apostolical Constitutions—has certainly not been used with this view so fully as it might have been. It is, perhaps, the most important document with which we have to do in the present investigation; and I believe my whole task will be simplified, if I confine myself to it in the present letter. No doubt the argument is far more powerful when its various elements are used in combination. The true force of historical evidence is best seen when other historical evidence

* Casparis Ziegleri *de Diaconis et Diaconissis Liber Commentarius* (Wittenberg 1678). The book is now rather rare, and is to be had sometimes bound up with his *Superintendens*, sometimes with his dissertation *de Dote Ecclesiæ*. He treats of Deaconesses in his last chapter.

† *Antiq. of the Chr. Church*, vol. i. bk. ii. ch. 22.

‡ See under the head "Diaconissa," in his *Thesaurus Ecclesiasticus*.

can be adduced to the same effect. But there is some advantage in the present instance, as regards clearness, in pursuing certain threads separately and independently. And if the strands of the rope are once distinctly in our hands, it is not very difficult afterwards to combine them.

A word must be said first upon the Apostolical Constitutions themselves. To discuss thoroughly their intrinsic value, the history of their formation, their probable date, would be quite impossible here. Still a few sentences on the subject are necessary.*

Now, in the first place, we cannot possibly accept these Constitutions as given literally by the Apostles. Nor can we even take them as a pure unmixed representation of the Church of the first three centuries. There is no doubt that they are largely interpolated from corrupt sources and from later periods. But then it must be observed that this does not affect our present argument so much as at first sight appears. Whatever is said about Deaconesses in the Apostolical Constitutions, proves *their existence* within the period during which these Constitutions came into their present form. It is evidence, moreover, of the *state of*

* I have throughout, besides the book and section, given the page from the well-known *Patres Apostolici* of Cotelier (Antw. 1698). I may add, that there is a recent and very convenient edition of the Constitutions alone by Ueltzen. (Schwerin and Rostock, 1853.)

feeling in the Church regarding those officers within that period. And the lower the date to which we must bring down the composition of these documents, the larger is the range of time through which we can trace these officers, and through which we can gather scattered notices of prevailing sentiment in regard to them.

But now, as to the date itself, I believe the opinion of those is correct, who consider a very large part of these Constitutions to be Ante-Nicene. It would not be difficult to range high authorities on two sides, the spurious and corrupt character of the documents in question being maintained on one side, their early date and proximity to the Apostles on the other. This of itself presents a strong ground for thinking that the intermediate position is the right one; a view which (to adduce only one name) is in harmony with the judgement of a shrewd critic, whose opinion on such a point deserves to have great weight, the late Professor Blunt.* I cannot well doubt that the Constitutions do give us what may be called a picture of the Church of the first three centuries—a picture

* *Plain Sermons,* vol. iii. p. 241. Prof. Blunt adduces as arguments for the early date of certain parts of the Constitutions, the allusions to persecutions, to Heathen tribunals, to the mixture of Christian and Heathen members in the same family, to the poverty and mean rank of the Christians, and to the strong sympathy among them, indicating, in his opinion, scanty numbers and close relationship.

distorted, doubtless, and in many places retouched — but still a picture which is a moderately good likeness on the whole. It is a picture in which many personages are found irregularly grouped together, and probably not always in their right order and relation. Among these personages, there is no doubt that there are *Deaconesses* to be seen. It is with them alone that we are concerned at present.

We ask three principal questions in regard to these Deaconesses. (1) How far are they really and definitely prominent personages in the scene before us? (2) What were their official duties? (3) What their ecclesiastical *status?* The answers to these questions will give us a clear and comprehensive view of the whole subject.

(1.) Now, in the first place, there is no doubt that the Deaconesses are *very prominent* in that picture of the Early Church which is given in the document under consideration.

The Apostolical Constitutions are by no means of great length; but those women who were engaged under this title in official ministrations are mentioned, or implied, more than twenty distinct times. And not only so; but considerable portions of two books (the third and the eighth) are taken up with regulations having reference to their ministry. And perhaps even more stress ought to be laid on those incidental notices which assume the office as a matter of course. When, for

instance, an institution is used in an illustrative manner, to exhibit an analogy or to elucidate a theory, it is evidently a familiar institution. Nor is the force of this remark weakened by the fact that the illustration or analogy may seem to us very fanciful and even revolting. We shall perhaps be disposed to find little fault with such a passage as the following, where, in comparing Christianity with Judaism, it is said (ii. 25, Cotel. 238), that Jesus is the High-priest, the Presbyters are the Priests, "the Deacons and Deaconesses, "and other subordinate persons,* the Levites." In another place † (ii. 26, Cotel. 239) we find a similar analogy, but with different details. Here the Bishop represents the Almighty Father, the Deacon is compared to the Son, the Deaconess to the Spirit, inasmuch as "she does and speaks "nothing without the Deacon," and moreover, "no woman is to come to the Bishop or Deacon "without the Deaconess."‡ In this instance we

* These other subordinate persons, placed here in the same general group as the Deacons and Deaconesses, are Singers, Doorkeepers, Widows, Virgins, and Orphans. I shall have occasion to refer to them afterwards.

† One of these contexts passes gradually into the other; and I cannot help thinking that the first part, where the Lay-people are addressed as "God's chosen church and holy "nation," is of earlier date than the last part, where the Bishop is spoken of as "God's vicegerent upon earth."

‡ [*Ἄνευ τῆς διακόνου μηδεμία προσίτω γυνὴ τῷ διακόνῳ ἢ τῷ ἐπισκόπῳ.*]

find it impossible to sympathize for a moment with this train of thought. But no argument could be better to prove the fact, that Deaconesses were a conspicuous part of the ecclesiastical organization of the time. On this head it is needless to say more. Whatever follows under the two other heads is a support and confirmation of this.

(2.) The last quotation introduces us at once to our second point, viz., the consideration of the *duties* of the primitive Deaconesses. We must not expect to be able to gather all their duties from the scattered notices in the Apostolical Constitutions; but one guiding principle which regulates these duties has already been before us. The ministrations of these persons had especial reference to the requirements of their own sex, and to the maintenance of decorum in the relations of men and women. Other passages in the Constitutions enable us to see this in detail.* Meantime, in order to perceive their full force, we must bear in mind the seclusion which was customary among Greek women, at the time when Christianity was established in the Levant.

* As another specimen of a general passage, I may mention iii. 19 (Cotel. 289), where it is said that the female Deacon is to make it "her active business to do service to the women." And again, iii. 15 (Cotel. 287), the Bishop is charged to choose "a faithful and holy Deaconess for the ministrations that relate to women." [*Προχειρίσασθαι διάκονον πιστὴν καὶ ἁγίαν εἰς τὰς τῶν γυναικῶν ὑπηρεσίας.*]

This kind of seclusion was in some degree observed in the Early Church, and at times of public worship. At such times the Deaconesses were door-keepers (viii. 28, Cotel. 411) to that part of the church where the women were assembled separately, as indeed is the custom among the Oriental Christians now. In another passage, where the church is compared to a ship (ii. 57, Cotel. 263), it is directed that the Deaconesses are to take their stand at the entrances of the women, "like those "who receive the fares of the passengers as they go "on board." And in what follows (ii. 58, Cotel. 267) it is particularly impressed upon them, that just as the Deacon is to see that any unknown stranger, or any poor man, or meanly-born man, coming into the congregation, is to be treated with respect, and have an honourable place cheerfully conceded to him; so the Deaconess is to attend to the comfort of all the women who come, whether rich or poor.*

Another service for which these ministers were wanted was on the occasion of the baptism of

* Something of the same kind is customary in the Society of Friends, whose rule is, that in public worship the men and women are seated separately. But the comparison may be pressed still further. In Sewel's *History of the Quakers* (1811) we are told, in an account of some opponents of the Order established by George Fox, that "they were greatly "bent against the women's meetings, who, *as Deaconesses*, met "together at set times, to provide for poor families, and sick "people that were in want," ii. 399.

women (iii. 15, Cotel. 287). This we understand at once, when we remember the primitive practice of immersion, as well as the secluded habits of females in the East. Thus it is said in a second passage, where the subject is mentioned (iii. 16, Cotel. 288), that Deaconesses are needed on such occasions, in order that the ceremony may be done "with becoming decency;" and in a third passage (viii. 28, Cotel. 411), that the arrangement is adopted "for the sake of decorum."*

The two duties which have just been mentioned may be truly called duties of routine. But there are other passages which exhibit the Deaconesses as engaged in a higher and less restricted sphere. Thus in a place (iii. 15, Cotel. 287) where it is said in general terms that "the services are many "for which a female diaconate is needed,"† it is particularly specified that it may be necessary to employ women under domestic conditions, where men would be unsuitable. This evidently opens a wide field of usefulness. Whatever the acts in which she might be engaged, the range of the *influence* of a Deaconess would of course depend on her character and her circumstances. The same remarks are applicable to her service among the poor, which has been just touched on already, but which

* For an illustration of the last point I referred to the Quakers. For an illustration of this I may refer to the arrangements customary among the Baptists.

† [This is the motto on the title-page.]

is more specifically mentioned elsewhere (iii. 19, Cotel. 289).

This last passage is worthy of especial notice for more reasons than one. It is prescribed that "the "Deacons are to be, like the Bishop, free from "blame, but more fitted for active service, that they "may be able to minister to those who need help: "and *the woman*," it is added, "must be zealous in "ministering to the women: and *both* * must be "ready for errands, for journeys, and for subordi-"nate service of every kind."† By "the woman" is meant "the female Deacon." Thus the passage is a very important commentary on 1 Tim. iii. 11, where "the women" are undoubtedly (as I think) not "the wives of the Deacons," but "female "Deacons."‡

But the point before us is the nature of the duties of these ministering women. And here clearly we see something of their wider range. Thus the allusion to journeys brings at once to our recollection another passage of Scripture, viz., Rom. xvi. 1, where "Phœbe, the deaconess of the church of "Cenchreæ," is presented to us as travelling on

* This reminds us of one of the Puritan regulations regarding "Deacons of both kinds." See above, p. 66, note.

† [*Ἀμωμοι ὡς καὶ ὁ ἐπίσκοπος, μόνον δὲ εὐσκυλτότεροι . . . . καὶ ἡ μὲν γυνὴ τὰς γυναῖκας σπουδάζουσα θεραπεύειν, ἀμφότεροι δὲ τὰ πρὸς ἀγγελίαν, ἐκδημίαν, ὑπηρεσίαν, δουλείαν.*]

‡ [*Γυναῖκας ὡσαύτως σεμνάς, κ.τ.λ.* See above p. 57. The separate mention of the Deacon's wife in the next verse is another decisive argument.]

some Christian errand from Corinth to Rome.* But we may proceed to gather more from this paragraph of the Constitutions, where the duties of the Diaconate are pursued in detail, and with rich illustrations from those passages of Scripture which speak of the example of Him, who came "not to be "ministered unto, but to minister." Bearing in mind the coordination of the male and female deacons, we naturally apply to both whatever is general. And where "the sick" are mentioned, as they are very prominently, we feel that we are especially within the sphere of feminine ministration. Another point, too, is worthy of notice. It is urged on the Deacons (and I presume this includes both branches of the Diaconate) that their duty is "to seek out cases of distress, and to inform the "bishop of those who need visiting." "For ye "ought," continues the sentence, "to be his very "life of activity, and his means of obtaining infor-"mation." This, however, is a wordy translation of a very terse and emphatic phrase.† I have never seen so well expressed what I conceive the practical effect of a well-arranged female Diaconate would be.‡ But I must pass to my third head,

* [See above, p. 119, note.]

† [Ψυχὴ γὰρ αὐτοῦ καὶ αἴσθησις εἶναι ὀφείλετε.]

‡ If I might hazard a conjecture, I should take the 19th Section of the third book to be an early and unmixed part of the Constitutions. It is full both of the words and the spirit of the New Testament; and it has no ultra-hierarchical

remarking only, as I proceed, that the fragments thus lightly put together show that the office of the early Deaconesses was concerned, not only with the routine of public worship and baptism, but with the condition of the poor, the life of families, the sufferings of the sick, with the parochial work of the clergy, and even with distant missions.

(3.) From the duties, then, of the Deaconess we pass to her *ecclesiastical status*: and some of the passages which I have already quoted give us her true position at once. We have seen the Deacon and Deaconess mentioned side by side as coordinate officers. And this is the case repeatedly in the Apostolical Constitutions. The latter was for the women what the former was for the men. We find the "man-deacon" and the "woman-deacon" as representing two sides of one office. This coordination of the two, and the subordination of both to the Bishops and Presbyters, together give a fair representation of the whole of the case.

The great line was drawn below the Presbyter. Just as it is said (iii. 6, Cotel. 277) that "women "must not teach in the church; for that our great "Teacher, the Lord Jesus, when He sent out the "twelve, sent not women to preach: and yet had "He no lack of women; for with Him were His "mother and His sisters, also Mary Magdalene,

features. Presbyters are not mentioned, and the diocese of the bishop seems to be little more than a parish. Compare Philipp. i. 1, iv. 2, 3.

"Mary the mother of James, the sisters of Lazarus, "Salome, and others:"—so in another place (iii. 9, Cotel. 282, 284) it is said that "women "ought themselves not to baptize, not to exercise "priestly functions; for," it is added, "to ordain "priestesses would be a Pagan impiety: had such "an office been destined for women, the Lord "would have been baptized, not by John, but by "His mother."*

But further, the Deaconess was in fact rather below the Deacon. This is clear from a passage in the eighth book (viii. 28, Cotel. 411), where the functions of the different ecclesiastical persons are described. Thus it is there said that, in the absence of the Presbyter, the Deacon is to exercise discipline over the Deaconess, as well as over the Sub-deacon, the Reader, and the Singer. The same result follows from another passage (viii. 31, Cotel. 412), concerning what remains of oblations at the Eucharist, where it is directed that the Bishop is to receive four parts, the Presbyters three, the Deacons two, and the Deaconesses, with the other subordinate officials, only one,—"each "class according to its dignity; for the church is "not a school of confusion, but of order."

But then, on the other hand, the Deaconess is by no means a mere lay person. She has an official

* It should be noticed, that in the Constitutions the Deacon, as well as the Deaconess, is precluded from baptizing (viii. 29, Cotel. 411).

status. She is formally appointed to something more than mere casual and voluntary duties.

In these Apostolical Constitutions we find three classes of women definitely mentioned as in some way distinguished from the rest of their sex—Deaconesses, Widows, and Virgins. At the Lord's Supper (viii. 13, Cotel. 405) these three classes communicate after the clergy and their subordinate ministers, and before the general body of the laity. But the Widows and Virgins do not appear in the same official character as the Deaconesses. The three classes are grouped together in the passage which was first cited in this letter (ii. 25, Cotel. 238); but immediately afterwards, when active official duty is to be used in the analogy (ii. 26, Cotel. 239), the Deaconess alone is adduced, and very different language is used of the others. The Widows and Orphans are compared to the Altar of Burnt-offering, the Virgins to the Altar of Incense. So we might contrast two consecutive sections in the eighth book, in one of which (viii. 30, Cotel. 411) it is said that tithes are intended partly for "the Virgins, the Widows, and those "who are suffering from poverty;"* whereas in the other, which relates to oblations at the Eucharist (viii. 31, Cotel. 413), the Deaconesses have a position, as above noticed, among official per-

* In the same section it is said that the first-fruits belong to the Priests, and those who exercise the Diaconate under them. I imagine the latter phrase may include both male and female Deacons.

sons, while Widows and Virgins are not mentioned. In my subsequent letters the terms "Widow" and "Virgin" will come under notice in their secondary application, as possibly synonymous with "Deaconess:" but in the Apostolical Constitutions I believe the distinction which I have drawn to be absolute; and, possibly, this distinction may have some bearing on the question of the antiquity of these documents. However this may be, it is important; and, so far as I know, it has not been clearly pointed out before.*

The most forcible proofs, however, of this distinction have not yet been quoted. Several chapters at the beginning of the third book are occupied with details regarding the Widows; conveying the impression that they were a class of persons registered to receive relief,† and also that they were a very troublesome class;‡ and then follows (iii. 7, Cotel. 281) the injunction—that they are to

* [The Apostolical Constitutions in their Coptic form seem not to mark this distinction so sharply between the Widow and the Deaconess, and accordingly they present the Widow to us in a more official character. She is appointed for prayer (Bunsen's *Hippolytus*, ii. 311, 312), also for nursing (307). It would be interesting if we could trace these local variations in detail. It is remarked (229) that each great church "had its own disciplinary regulations and "forms."]

† Here we recur inevitably to 1 Tim. v. 3—16; but discussion of this must be reserved.

‡ [Μὴ χήρας, ἀλλὰ πήρας is one of the severe expressions in this part of the book.]

obey not only the Bishops, Presbyters, and Deacons, but also the Deaconesses. But, above all, the decisive words in the eighth book are to be remarked — "The Virgin is not ordained" (viii. 24, Cotel. 409); "The Widow is not ordained" (viii. 25, *ib.*) Whereas the Deaconess, on the other hand, is most explicitly "ordained."*

I have said that the Deaconess is, according to the Constitutions, "ordained." By this I mean that she is set apart to her office by prayer and the laying on of hands. The prayer used on the occasion (and it is a most beautiful and expressive prayer) is actually given to us (viii. 20, Cotel. 408). And as to the laying on of hands, this is not a mere inference from the prayer, or from the technical meaning of a word.† The direction is most explicit, and a strong contrast with the above-mentioned prohibition (viii. 19, Cotel. 407) — "As "regards the Deaconess, O Bishop, thou shalt lay "thy hands on her, in the presence of the Presby-"ters, the Deacons, and the Deaconesses; and thou "shalt say"—. Then follows the prayer.‡

* [In the Coptic Regulations, the Widow, who, as we have seen, is there not very sharply distinguished from the Deaconess, is simply "appointed, not ordained;" for "she has "not to perform any public λειτουργία." But then neither the Reader nor Sub-deacon is ordained. The former is simply "appointed with prayer," the latter simply "named." Bunsen's *Hipp.* ii. p. 311.]

† [Χειροτονία, equivalent to ἐπιτιθέναι τὰς χεῖρας. See above, p. 47, n. 2.]

‡ The prayer is quoted at length above, p. 39.

But now I have to say, in conclusion, with regard to this "ordination," that the very same technical term is applied (iii. 11, Cotel. 284) to Readers, Doorkeepers, and Singers, as well as to Deaconesses; and that the regulation concerning the imposition of hands on these female ministers is immediately followed by regulations in the same terms, having reference to Sub-deacons and Readers: — "O Bishop, in appointing the Sub-"deacon thou shalt lay thy hands on him." (viii. 21, Cotel. 408.) "Appoint the Reader by laying "thy hands on him." (viii. 22, Cotel. 409.) We must not allow ourselves to be misled by the meaning of the word "ordination," as we now employ it. The imposition of hands had a wider range in the Early Church than it has with us;* and distinctions must be drawn with regard to the import of the ceremony on different occasions. In the case of the Bishop and the Presbyter, it is a solemn consecration. In the case of the Deaconess, it is only an official blessing. We ourselves are familiar with a line of demarcation, not very dissimilar, between Ordination and Confirmation.

It is not to be wondered at that those Protestants on the Continent who have been practically occupied in restoring the Primitive Female Diaconate, have differed in regard to the adoption of the imposition of hands. This question of restoration,

* See Heb. vi. 2.

however, is not the subject with which I am now concerned. I am endeavouring to reproduce and arrange the facts which ancient writings supply to us in illustration of this Diaconate. We have now succeeded in obtaining from the Apostolical Constitutions a clear, though perhaps imperfect, representation of it. The ministers in question are exhibited to us here as strictly subordinate to the Clergy, but still as a very conspicuous part of the ecclesiastical system; they had a very decidedly official position, though of the *Diaconic* as opposed to the *Presbyteral* kind; and their work had chief reference to Christians of their own sex, and arose partly out of the social circumstances of the times, and also is seen to touch those various points of social life, at which the service of women is peculiarly effectual.

From the general features of the case we naturally turn to details. And, no doubt, the Constitutions leave many questions unanswered. Yet they do answer, approximately or fully, some of those questions of detail which we are most inclined to ask. Within what limits of age were the Deaconesses chosen? Of this nothing seems to be said. How were they supported? From a passage quoted above we should gather that, so far as they needed support, it came from church collections. Were they allowed to retain their own property? Nothing is said which implies the contrary. Were they allowed to marry? There is no hint of any prohibition. What was their

number? We have the sensible rule (iii. 19, Cotel. 289)* that it is to be "proportionate to the "size of the congregation." † Were they required to go through a time of probation? This is not made the subject of any express rule.‡ What were their qualifications? To this the answer is explicit. As to condition, they were to be unmarried women or widows who had been once married (vi. 17, Cotel. 348): as to character, they were to be "blameless and of active habits" (iii. 19, Cotel. 289), "faithful and holy" (iii. 15, Cotel. 287), "faithful "and worthy of honour" (vi. 17, Cotel. 348).

Some of these details will come more fully under notice in a second and a third letter which I hope to write on Primitive Deaconesses. The first will trace the subject through the Councils and the Canon and Civil Law, the latter through the writings of the Greek and Latin Fathers. §

J. S. H.

* This passage, adduced again below, is viewed as inclusive of both kinds of Deacons.

† [Ἀνάλογοι πρὸς τὸ πλῆθος τῆς ἐκκλησίας.]

‡ [In the Coptic form we find this provision regarding the official Widow. "Her husband must have been dead a long "time. Even if she is old, let her be proved for a time; for "sometimes the passions long survive."—*Hippol.* ii. 311.]

§ [I have found no leisure yet to fulfil the promise which is given here. Much yet remains to be done before the subject of Primitive Deaconesses is thoroughly sifted and made clear; and perhaps the attempts made here will induce others to prosecute the task. See Preface.]

January 1862.

APPENDIX V.

SISTERS OF MERCY IN THE GREEK CHURCH.

The information contained in these remaining pages is interesting, both as a specimen of the recent simultaneous efforts, in very various countries and under very various circumstances,* to organize the charitable ministrations of women, and as an illustration of the modern Greek Church (a vast Communion too much depreciated amongst us) on its active and benevolent side.

Two passages of this female ministration in two different scenes, one in the Crimea, the other in St. Petersburg, are here placed together. How far the two may be historically connected, how far the latter may have arisen out of the former, I am not able to state. But, from the shape in which the information has been communicated,†

* See above, p. 8.

† The materials from which this Appendix is compiled (viz. the pamphlet mentioned below, the translation from a Russian periodical, and the supplementary statistics), are all due to the kindness of Madame Boutakoff. This is a name well known in Russia. Her husband, Captain Boutakoff, is eminent as having first thoroughly surveyed the Sea of Aral,

and from the occurrence of two important names in both accounts, I imagine that the connection is close.

We all remember the siege of Sebastopol, as seen from our point of view, and how the blessing of systematic feminine service grew out of the curse and horrors of war. It is instructive to look upon this scene from the opposite point of view, to pass within the besieged bastions, and to see the same charity arising from the same or worse sufferings within the fortress, and in the same gentle and courageous form, as among our own wounded and sickening soldiers without.

The account before us* gives the history of one year, viz. from Dec. 1, 1854, to Dec. 1, 1855. The newspapers told us much of reinforcements of troops which were introduced from time to time within the Russian lines. Here we have the picture of the arrival of successive detachments of Sisters of Mercy. I use the term as generally descriptive.† The title used in the narrative is,

and begun to develope the trade on its rivers. Her brother-in-law, Admiral Boutakoff, commanded the "Vladimir."

* *Die Gemeinschaft der Schwestern zur Keuzerhöhung zur Pflege der Verwundeten und Kranken.* Von dem Akademiker, Prof. Pirogoff. Berlin, 1856. Other accounts of this Sisterhood may possibly have appeared in England. I have seen no other notice except a slight allusion in the *Christian Remembrancer* for July 1861, p. 230.

† Madame Boutakoff, in her letter, employs the term

"Community of Sisters for the honouring of "the Cross in the Care of the Wounded and "Sick;" and the end and aim of the association is thus given in the instructions to the Superintendent (*Oberinn*): "out of the motive of warm "love of our neighbour, and with honest self-"denial, in the name of our Lord JESUS CHRIST, "in the tending of the sick and wounded in mili-"tary hospitals, to assist with activity according "to the instructions of the physicians, and, be-"sides this, to strengthen by Christian consola-"tion those whom they tend in the midst of their "sufferings."

It was at the end of November 1854 that the first detachment, consisting of twenty-eight sisters, arrived at Simferopol. Many of them were presently prostrated by typhus fever; and those who escaped the infection were obliged to devote their strength to caring for their sick sisters. The work was renewed in Baktchiserai; but again with the same disheartening interruption. On the 13th of January, their ministrations began where the pressing calamities of war were most urgent, viz. on the south side of Sebastopol; and about this

"Deaconesses" in reference to all that is described here; but whether the term is used officially or not, I do not know. These "Sisters" are to be carefully distinguished from the German Deaconesses mentioned above (p. 126, n.) as established among the German residents at St. Petersburg, and also (I believe) from the nuns connected with the old conventual system of the Greek Church.

time they were joined by the second detachment.* Here we have an account of the systematic distribution of their services, under the direction of Dr. Pirogoff. They were divided into three companies — those who attended to the immediate wants of the wounded, preparing bandages and binding up wounds (*die Verbandschwestern*); those who took care of medicines, and were responsible for their orderly and regular distribution (*die Apothekerinnen*†); and those who discharged the duties of nursing, the washing and diet of the patients, and whatever was connected with the cleanliness of the hospitals (*die Wirthinnen*). On the 17th of January, the third detachment came, under Sister Bakunin; and on the 28th of March, the fourth, under Sister v. Budberg. These two names appear prominently afterwards in the most painful and exciting parts of the narrative.‡

Names very familiar to us — the Nicolajeff Battery — the North Fort — Inkermann — the

* The thoroughly Russian character of what is here described will be seen if the names of this detachment are given as a specimen. The Sisters of this group were named Nasimoff, Wigiliansky, Bogdanoff, Schinkewitsch, Linsky, Salebedsky, Krupsky, Siniawsky, Grigorjeff, Kusnezoff, Protopopoff, and Golubzoff.

† See above (p. 98) what is said of the Mülhausen Deaconesses.

‡ Pp. 5, 7, 8, 10, 12, 14, &c.

Malakoff—occur in various parts of this touching story. To give it consecutively and in detail would occupy too much space. Three scenes may be briefly noted, as samples of the whole.

One of the most dreadful was in that hospital where those cases were received which were hopeless, and in which gangrene had supervened. "Here Sisters Grigorjeff, Bogdanoff, and Golubzoff "patiently went through the hardest and most "thankless offices of the Sisterhood, and such as "require the highest grade of self-denial, as well "as the strongest health." It is truly added that no one to whom such things only come by hearsay, can really know the horrors of such an office, or appreciate its devotion. Cries of pain and terror—sights the most hideous and revolting—delirium, despair, and death, were the familiar life of these sisters, and of the one Priest, the "Monk Benjamin," who is mentioned here as discharging the duties of his office in this particular hospital.

From this we may pass to the large operation room, into which the wounded were being continually brought, from the fourth, fifth, and sixth bastions, and where the Sisters were actively and incessantly employed day and night. The elements of the picture here are litters bespattered with blood—the noise of bursting shells—groans and mangled limbs—the steam of the gore (which was

an inch deep under foot)* mingled with the fumes of chloroform — the doors opening and shutting — and wounded men continually carried in and out, with the short word of order, "on the table," "on the bed," "to this hospital," "to that hos-"pital"—the white mantles of the Sisters moving silently to and fro among the grey military cloaks of officers and men — and then at night the whole made more dismal by the light of candles and lanterns. Here, too, to complete the picture, must be mentioned Paskewitsch the Sailor, the "living "tourniquet," as he is called,† who could hardly find time to follow the surgeons as they summoned him from bed to bed. Here Sister Bakunin presided with an astonishing coolness, strength, and forgetfulness of self, and deaf to the entreaties of Sister v. Budberg, who in vain counselled her to intermit her exertions at least during the night.

We may turn now to the retreat over the bridge, when the soldiers and Sisters passed on the 27th of August ‡ to the north side of the city. On that day Sister v. Budberg received a contusion on the shoulder, when she was helping a wounded man on his way to the hospital. On the day before she had been injured by the shattering of a window. Her task on the retreat was to take charge of a

* "Das geronnene Blut einen Zoll hoch stand."—P. 12.

† "Er besass eine besondere Kunst, die Arterien bei "Amputationen zuzudrücken."—*Ib.*

‡ In our style, the well-remembered Sept. 8th.

heavy burden containing some precious relics of the Sisterhood, and some money belonging to the wounded;* and she almost sank with fatigue when she reached the northern bank. The last of the Sisterhood who crossed the bridge was Sister Bakunin.

At the last date (viz. December 1855)† the distribution of these Sisters was as follows, viz.: —(1.) Twenty-eight at Simferopol, the head-quarters. (2.) Nine attending there to the Transport Service. Here, too, was the chief depôt of medical stores (containing linen, tea, coffee, wine, sugar, drugs, bandages, &c.), under the supervision of the Sisters, and supplied by the Grand-Duchess Helen. (3.) Nine in Baktchiserai. (4.) Three on the Belbek.‡ (5.) Six in Perekop. (6.)

* In July a convalescent hospital had been established under canvas, in the Belbek-Valley: and here several Sisters served, living in tents and Tartar huts. One of them was appointed to have the especial charge of the money and property belonging to the patients. P. 21.

† Cape Paul was one scene of the labours of these devoted women (pp. 14, 17, 18, 20); but this was at an earlier period, before the Malakoff was taken. Those who have followed the history of the siege in connection with the topography can realize the danger and difficulty of this position.

‡ It is remarked here in a note that those three Sisters had since the day of the retreat lived in the Belbek-Valley, in a damp and miserable hut, that they might attend to the wounded soldiers. Here, too, appears again the good "Monk Benjamin," in assiduous attention to the sufferers.

Twenty-six in Nicolajeff. (7.) Twenty-three in Cherson. Each of these stations had a depôt of stores similar to the above, but on a smaller scale.

What has hitherto been given is taken from the German pamphlet mentioned in the note.* What follows is translated from a Russian periodical,† and relates to St. Petersburg. I am not aware, as I said before, whether the latter of these charitable organizations has arisen from the other; but two names are prominent in both—that of the Princess, to whose generosity the origination and support of the whole is largely due—and that of Dr. Tarasoff, whose happy task it has been to carry the wishes of Her Imperial Highness into effect.

"The Sisters live in a house bought by Her Im-
" perial Highness the Grand-Duchess Helen. This
" house is situated in the poorest quarter of St.
" Petersburg; for the destitute, the poor, and the
" sick, are the real family of the Sisters. In this
" residence they are close to two sections of the
" Hospital for the working-classes, to the Chil-
" dren's Hospital, and to the Hospital for the

Dr. Pirogoff urged the removal of the Sisters to Duwanky, where 600 were sick in hospital; but it was felt that this change would be so great a blow to the miserably lodged sufferers on the Belbek that the plan was given up.

* Page 247.

† The date is Jan. 1861.

"Navy. They do regular service in all these "establishments, and live here in the midst of the "working men and working women of various "Factories, who are generally the people most "subject to accidents and need.

"Knowing all this, you expect, when you enter "into the house occupied by the Sisters, to see the "most gloomy and painful sights; but you find "quite the contrary; you feel that you are enter-"ing a house where the sufferer obtains relief, and "the unhappy finds consolation and peace.

"The house occupies three sides of a wide "court-yard, and the back-ground is formed by a "large and spacious garden. The lower part of "the house is occupied with rooms for the recep-"tion of the poor, constituting in fact a kind of "temporary hospital, where are seen every morn-"ing a number of sick and wounded people. These "belong generally to the working-classes, and such "as cannot quite leave off work, and are not ill "enough to go to a regular hospital, though badly "in need of medical assistance. This they get "from the physician of the establishment, Dr. "Tarasoff, who, with the help of the Sisters, tends "their wounds and gives them medicine. And "what a number, what a variety of cases seek and "find relief here! From the 1st of January to the "4th of May, their number amounted to 2,643 "persons.

"With the exception of these rooms, the lower

" flat is occupied with the kitchen, the dining-room
" of the Sisters, a few bed-rooms for them, and
" some bed-rooms for the servants.

" In the second flat is the church. It is a beau-
" tiful hall full of light, with large windows, and
" supported by columns; with no costly ornaments
" inside, but simply with a few excellent pictures.*
" But everything is full of taste and simplicity,
" and gives you an idea of the holiness and purity
" of the place.

" The Head Sister of the establishment, and
" the beginners, or probationers, who are under
" her special care, live on the same floor. It
" contains also a large hall, where during the
" evening the Bible is read and the first elements
" of Medicine are taught. On the third floor are
" only the bed-rooms of the Sisters. They live
" two or three in the same room, as would natu-
" rally be the case with real sisters in a large
" family.

" And in general the visitor is struck from the
" first moment of his entrance by this air of family

* The passion of Greek Christians for pictures and their abhorrence of images are well known. Their feelings on the subject probably range through all intermediate degrees, from the mere love of art and symbolical decoration in the higher classes, to a very lamentable superstition in the lower. See Prof. Stanley's *Lectures on the Eastern Church*, pp. 361—365. In Russia, as is natural, architecture and painting and church music are on a higher level than among the Greeks of the Levant.

" life which reigns in the whole house; you see
" order without formality; you are received with-
" out any empty ceremonies, received openly and
" simply, as you are generally received by good
" but very busy people.

" And in truth the Sisters are very busy. On
" the 28th of December, 1860, was opened a small
" hospital in the house, with the destination not
" only of helping the sick, but of being as a sort of
" model, where the Sisters learn to observe all the
" rules which are necessary for the bodies and
" minds of the poor women received there. The
" number of the beds does not exceed fifteen; the
" rooms are not very large, but they are airy; and
" the arrangements for ventilation and warming
" are made by the best workmen. There is not
" the least luxury, for even the greatest cleanliness
" cannot be called luxury. The service is furnished,
" without any exception, by the Probationer-Sis-
" ters, under the superintendence of an elder
" Sister, who has devoted all her life and all her
" soul to the service of humanity. This is the
" school where the Sisters are prepared for a wider
" work in larger hospitals: here they learn to de-
" vote themselves entirely to the service of man-
" kind. Here they are penetrated with that holy
" spirit of love which they bring everywhere with
" them. Here, too, they learn to love their Sister-
" hood, which gives them a path so full of blessing
" to their souls, while it prepares them an honour-

" able retreat for their old age, after a busy and
" well-employed life.

"Such also was the life which was led by the
" Deaconesses in the earliest time of Christianity.
" Many centuries have passed since; but the holy
" work of Christian love and activity has never
" ceased—has never been interrupted—although
" it has not always been clearly noticed in the
" midst of the busy and noisy life of society.

"Let us pray for the benediction of God on
" this really Christian establishment of Sisters.
" It is impossible not to sympathize with their
" peaceful activity, and not to wish that in many,
" many hearts the desire should be awakened of
" helping and spreading this holy work of love and
" of help to mankind."

In addition to this translated article, the following statistical details have been communicated:—

In May 1861, the community consisted of 66 Sisters, distributed in the following manner:—Twenty-four Sisters in Cronstadt in the great Hospital of the Navy, where they have to attend constantly from 900 to 1,200 sick; eight Sisters in the Naval Hospital in St. Petersburg, which contains 200 beds; three in the Elizabeth Asylum for children, 40 beds; two in the Maximilian Hospital, 30 beds; twenty Sisters in the two hospitals for Workmen, which contain always at least 500 dangerously ill; lastly, five Sisters are in charge of

different departments of the household (one Head Sister, one housekeeper, one superintending the beginners, one visiting the poor, one in the hospital of the house). Three Sisters are incurably ill.

The number of the beginners naturally varies; at the present moment there are fifteen. They attend the sick women in the hospital of the house, — they dress the wounds of the poor people who come here every day — and they help the physician of the establishment, who gives advice and medicine without any payment to 60 or 70 persons coming to consult him every day.*

The Sisters tend constantly in the hospitals more than 200 sick — and in the *ambulance* from 1,800 to 2,000 in a month. When the number is further increased, a certain proportion of Sisters will be more specially devoted to the visiting of the poor and to the teaching of poor children.†

April 1862.

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* Except in the hospitals of the Navy, they are supported in all the stations by the Grand-Duchess Helen.

† It should be added that the Sisters take no vows, and that they are not bound to remain in the establishment more than one year.

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